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When visiting with troops, Mattis reveals personal side

By ROBERT BURNS
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — On a summer morning in a desolate corner of Iraq's western desert, Jim Mattis learned he'd narrowly evaded an assassination attempt.

A Sunni Arab man had been caught planting a bomb on a road shortly before Mattis and his small team of Marines passed by. Told the captured insurgent spoke English, Mattis decided to talk to him.

After Mattis offered a cigarette and coffee, the man said he tried to kill the general and his fellow Marines because he resented the foreign soldiers in his land. Mattis said he understood the sentiment but assured the insurgent he was headed for Abu Ghraib, the infamous U.S.-run prison. What happened next explains the point of the story.

"General," the man asked Mattis, "if I am a model prisoner do you think someday I could emigrate to America?"

SEE MATTIS ON PAGE 8



ROBERT BURNS/AP

Defense Secretary Jim Mattis greets soldiers at Fort Bragg, N.C., in December.

CALIFORNIA MUDSLIDES



DANIEL DREIFUSS/AP

A member of the Long Beach Search and Rescue team looks for survivors of a mudslide in Montecito, Calif. Crews expanded their search Wednesday, a day after mud and debris roared into neighborhoods from hillsides stripped of vegetation during a recent wildfire.

The search continues

Death toll climbs as rescuers look for survivors in wake of torrential storm

By CHRISTOPHER WEBER
AND ANDREW DALTON
Associated Press

MONTECITO, Calif. — The death toll from the mudslides that struck Southern California climbed to 15 on Wednesday as rescue crews searched for anyone trapped, injured or dead in the onslaught that smashed homes

and swept away cars.

The drenching rainstorm that triggered the disaster cleared out and was no longer a hindrance as searchers made their way across a landscape strewn with boulders and covered shoulder-high in places with mud the consistency of wet cement.

"Right now our assets are focused on determining if anyone is still alive in any of those

structures that have been damaged," Santa Barbara County Sheriff Bill Brown said.

Brown said that several dozen homes were destroyed or severely damaged, and that there are probably many more in similar condition in areas still inaccessible.

At least 15 people were confirmed dead, SEE SEARCH ON PAGE 10

PACIFIC

Moon credits Trump for role in Korea talks

By KIM GAMEL
Stars and Stripes

SEOUL, South Korea — South Korea's president gave his U.S. counterpart, President Donald Trump, credit for playing a "very big" role in bringing the two Koreas together for breakthrough talks the day before.

Moon Jae-in was responding to a question about Trump's claim that his tough talk against North Korea created the right environment for Tuesday's meeting between senior officials from both sides in the border village of Panmunjom.

"I think the contribution of President Trump was very big in accomplishing inter-Korean talks. I'd like to express my gratitude," Moon said Wednesday during a nationally televised press conference.

The South Korean president faces a delicate balance in his efforts to pursue peace with the North while vowing to work with the United States and other allies to pressure the communist state to abandon its nuclear weapons program.

Tuesday's meeting ended after about 12 hours with North Korea agreeing to send a high-level delegation to next month's Winter Olympics in the South Korean resort village of Pyeongchang, a key goal of Moon's.

The countries also agreed to hold military talks aimed at easing hostilities in front-line areas, and they restored the second military hotline in a week.

Moon told reporters that he's very encouraged that the inter-Korean dialogue has been restored and said he would be willing to hold a summit with North Korean leader Kim Jong Un under the right conditions.

"I keep myself open to any meeting including the summit if it's helpful for an improvement of South-North relations or a settlement of the North Korean nuclear issue," he said. "But to have the summit, some conditions must be established. I think a tangible outcome must be



Courtesy of the Blue House

South Korean President Moon Jae-in speaks at a press conference in Seoul, South Korea, on Wednesday. Moon has given President Donald Trump credit for a role in bringing North and South Korea together for talks this week.

ensured."

Moon, who took office in May promising to pursue peace with the North, stressed that he would continue to work closely with the U.S. and other allies toward the ultimate goal of denuclearizing the divided peninsula.

"Now the dialogue with North Korea has begun, but because the North Korean nuclear issue has not been resolved, South Korea will continue to keep pace with the pressure and sanctions by the international community," he said. "South Korea has no plans to ease our unilateral sanctions against North Korea that are in place in addition to international sanctions for now."

While he pledged solidarity with the international community, Moon expressed concern that increased sanctions and pressure could lead to unintended clashes and

conflict.

"Therefore, we need to have a deep consideration regarding how we would appropriately manage these tensions," he said.

The U.S. welcomed the meeting but noted it will hold close consultations with South Korean officials to ensure the North's participation in the Olympics doesn't violate U.N. Security Council sanctions.

"The United States is committed to a safe and successful Winter Olympic Games, and the United States will send a high-level presidential delegation to the Games," State Department spokeswoman Heather Nauert said in a press statement.

The positive tone was tempered by remarks by chief North Korean delegate Ri Son Gwon, who said Tuesday that his country's nuclear weapons are aimed at the United States, not South Korea.

"All our state-of-the-art strategic weapons like atomic bombs, hydrogen bombs and intercontinental ballistic rockets are completely targeting the United States. They are not targeting our compatriots" in the South, Ri said in media footage released from Panmunjom.

North Korea has long insisted its goal is to develop a nuclear weapon that could target the U.S. mainland as a self-defensive measure. It has demonstrated rapid progress in its missile program with a series of tests over the past two years, including three underground nuclear explosions since January 2016.

Ri also said the two Koreas will hold working-level talks to follow up on cooperation in the Feb. 9-25 Olympics, which will be followed by the Paralympics in March.

The U.S. and South Korea have agreed to suspend annual war games that are usually held around that time until after the Winter Games in a nod to the North, which despises the joint military exercises that it believes are a rehearsal for an invasion.

Past agreements with the North Koreans have collapsed, and critics cautioned that the North may be trying to divide Washington and Seoul or to persuade the international community to relax sanctions and diplomatic efforts to isolate the regime.

Trump has traded threats with Pyongyang and warned military action is on the table. But he also said as recently as this past weekend that he would be willing to speak by phone with Kim Jong Un himself.

"With all of the failed 'experts' weighing in, does anybody really believe that talks and dialogue would be going on between North and South Korea right now if I wasn't firm, strong and willing to commit our total 'might' against the North. Fools, but talks are a good thing!" Trump said in a tweet last week.

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MILITARY

Army secretary addresses issues at town hall meeting

Esper talks tour lengths, spouse jobs, produce prices in Korea

By MARCUS FICHTL
Stars and Stripes

CAMP HUMPHREYS, South Korea — Soldiers won't have to move as often, spouses will find it easier to get jobs and there will be access to cheaper produce if the new Army secretary has his way.

Secretary of the Army Mark Esper addressed those issues with soldiers, civilians and family members during a town hall meeting this week at the 8th Army's new headquarters south of Seoul.

Esper — a Gulf War veteran and former Raytheon lobbyist who took the Army's top job in November — said he hopes to give troops the choice of staying longer at duty stations.

Soldiers stationed overseas often miss career opportunities such as attending professional schools or specialized training that peers

at home can hit more easily, he said.

"You should not be penalized by what the Army needs you to do," he told troops gathered at Camp Humphreys' Freedom Chapel. "It's the complete opposite of what we should be doing."

Dependents at the meeting said they felt penalized by six-month waits for background checks needed to work on-post schools and child development centers.

That can be a problem for families' finances and makes it tough to staff services at Humphreys, which has increased in population from 12,000 to 26,000 and will soon be home to more than 40,000 personnel.

Esper said he's looking at decentralized background checks for spouses seeking on-post employment. Keeping families at bases longer will help spouses

pursue their careers and cut down on the number of times military children change schools, he said.

"It all improves the quality of life you and your family members experience," said Esper, who told the Military Times in December that soldiers should be able to stay at a duty station for up to six years.

Some at the meeting complained about high grocery prices at on-post commissaries and a rule limiting families to a single vehicle that they say discourages people from shopping at local markets.

However, Korea Defense Commissary Agency chief Wayne Walk told them that on-post prices are as low as they can go. The commissary's requirement is to maintain a 30 percent average savings on produce, he said at the



MARCUS FICHTL/Stars and Stripes

Secretary of the Army Mark Esper takes part in a town hall meeting at Camp Humphreys, South Korea, on Tuesday.

meeting.

"Believe me, if we buy a can of beans for 10 cents we sell it for 10 cents," he said.

Walk conceded that commissaries set prices based on local brick-and-mortar stores — not open-air markets where produce can be found much cheaper.

Esper suggesting allowing small grocers to set up stalls on-post.

"I don't know if it's possible, but I'm just trying to use common sense," he said.

Col. Scott Mueller, Humphreys' commander, suggested that such a solution may be in the works. He told those in attendance that the Pyeongtaek mayor's office had recently asked about allowing local grocers to sell on base.

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Mattis apologizes to Japan for Okinawa aircraft mishaps

By MATTHEW M. BURKE
AND HANA KUSUMOTO
Stars and Stripes

CAMP SCHWAB, Okinawa — The United States has apologized to the Japanese government for a recent rash of military aviation mishaps that have sparked fear and anger on the southern island prefecture of Okinawa.

Secretary of Defense James Mattis delivered the apology over the phone Tuesday to his Japanese counterpart, Defense Minister Itsunori Onodera, a Ministry of Defense spokesman said Wednesday.

Mattis provided details on recent emergency landings by two Okinawa-based Marine Corps aircraft — an AH-1Z Viper helicopter on Monday and a UH-1Y Venom on Saturday — and vowed to address the "important" issue of aircraft safety.

During their call, Onodera reportedly asked Mattis, a retired Marine four-star general, to take additional measures to prevent future mishaps.

Onodera told reporters the Defense Ministry has requested that the U.S. Forces Japan commander Lt. Gen. Jerry Martinez conduct safety checks and maintenance on all U.S. military aircraft in Japan.

A spate of U.S. military aircraft mishaps on or around the southern Japanese island prefecture have led to heightened safety concerns among Okinawans.

On Dec. 13, a CH-53E Super Stallion's window inexplicably became separated from the aircraft and landed on an elementary school sports field adjacent to Marine Corps Air Station Futenma's fence line. More than 50 schoolchildren were playing at the time, and one boy was slightly injured from a pebble that flew up during impact.

On Dec. 7, a plastic part thought to belong

to a U.S. military helicopter landed on the roof of a local day care facility, leading to protests in front of U.S. military facilities.

In October, a 1st Marine Aircraft Wing Super Stallion made an emergency landing in a farmer's field outside Okinawa's Northern Training Area after an inflight fire. The helicopter was an almost total loss.

The incidents have drawn the ire of Okinawa's small but potent protest movement and its anti-base Gov. Takeshi Onaga and served as a rallying cry in the fight against relocating Marine air operations within the prefecture.

Okinawa Deputy Gov. Moritake Tomikawa lodged a protest with the U.S. military Tuesday over the latest emergency landings and called for all U.S. military aircraft on Okinawa to be grounded until safety checks are conducted — something the local government has been demanding since last month's CH-53E incident. Okinawa was in Tokyo on Wednesday to lodge protests with Japan's Cabinet and foreign and defense ministries.

Onaga has called for the immediate suspension of Viper and Venom helicopter flights until the causes that forced them to land have been determined.

"Although no damage or injuries ... have been confirmed, one misstep ... could result in a serious accident involving human lives and properties," he wrote in a protest letter to Lt. Gen. Lawrence Nicholson, III Marine Expeditionary Force commander. "These cases continue to raise serious doubts and distrust concerning the aircraft maintenance and the safety management put in place by the U.S. military."

Also Tuesday, Foreign Minister Taro Kono expressed regret over the emergency landings and requested preventative measures in discussions with U.S. Ambassador



CALEB MAHER/Courtesy of the U.S. Marine Corps

Marines with Heavy Marine Helicopter Squadron 466 lift a UH-1Y Venom after it made a precautionary landing in Okinawa, Japan, on Monday.

William Hagerty.

"Frequent accidents amplify the local people's anxiety and that the Government of Japan has a serious concern on that tendency," Kono told Hagerty, according to a Foreign Affairs Ministry statement.

In response, Hagerty reportedly said the U.S. "considers the safety of the local people in Japan, including Okinawa, the top priority." He vowed to strengthen preventative and safety measures and to share details of the investigations into the incidents as soon as they become available.

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Navy recruiter suspected of using role to lure victim

By ANNA MARUM
The (Portland, Ore.) Oregonian

A Beaverton, Ore., man is in jail on suspicion of using his role as a Navy recruiter to lure at least one minor into sexual relations.

The Clackamas County Sheriff's Office arrested Sean William Kelly, 27, on Monday. Kelly faces charges that include second-degree sex abuse, third-degree sex abuse, luring a minor and sexual delinquency of a minor.

Police said the victim, a student, met Kelly while he was working for the Navy in an Oregon City, Ore., recruitment office.

Dan Rachal, a spokesman for the regional Navy recruitment office based in Portland, Ore., said Kelly will remain in the Navy while the service conducts its own investigation.

Kelly entered the Navy in 2009 in Illinois. Rachal said. He was assigned to the Portland area as a recruiter June 10, 2015, and worked out of recruiting offices in Oregon City and Vancouver.

While Kelly is still on the Navy's payroll, he's no longer in the field recruiting, Rachal said.

Though Rachal could not immediately provide details of Kelly's duties as a recruiter, he said Navy recruiters typically deal with men and women between the ages of 18 and 24. They often visit high schools, and 17-year-old seniors can enlist with parental consent.

Rachal declined to comment on Kelly's case, as it is ongoing, but he said the Navy takes such allegations seriously and will cooperate with authorities.

MILITARY

\$70M in building planned at Grafenwoehr

By MARTIN EGNASH
Stars and Stripes

GRAFENWOEHR, Germany — The Army plans to build new facilities at Grafenwoehr Training Area this year, mainly to support the increased training requirements in Germany and Eastern Europe.

The projects, valued at about \$70 million, are set to begin this spring with work on a vehicle maintenance shop and a modern training support center.

The new \$20 million training facility, which will include classrooms and combat simulators, will be located at Camp Algier, adjacent to the main post. It will replace 16 different buildings spread out around the training area, cutting down on travel time for soldiers.

"The construction of these new buildings underlines the Army's efforts to provide state-of-the-art home facilities, allowing best training opportunities for its soldiers and their partners within NATO and allied forces," Army spokesman Nathan Van Shaik said.

The new training center will have several different types of simulators covering artillery, anti-tank and other infantry skills, said Training Support Center chief Peter Rocha. Some of them will be portable.

Many of the simulators and training devices are designed so as many as 25 soldiers at a time can check them out and easily take them to a classroom within the facility. The centralized location will help soldiers rotating through the area conduct training without wasting time getting



MARTIN EGNASH/Stars and Stripes

Construction equipment sits at the site of the new elementary school on Grafenwoehr Training Area, Germany, on Tuesday.

around an unfamiliar base.

The \$50 million vehicle maintenance shop, located near the main post on Camp Aachen, will provide a place for soldiers to take care of the tactical vehicles in use in the training area, such as the Strykers belonging to the 2nd Cavalry Regiment based in Vilseck or the various heavy-armor platforms brought over from the U.S. in support of Operation Atlantic Resolve and the enhanced forward presence in Poland. Atlantic Resolve and the forward presence are initiatives aimed at reassuring allies along Russia's western border.

The new buildings will be located outside

the natural protected areas of the base. Because of the clearing of land needed to make room for the facilities, new trees will be planted in other areas of the base, in keeping with German environmental laws.

"A forest conversion process with environmental impact assessment, including German public information was implemented," Van Shaik said.

The projects are being planned and constructed in a joint effort between the U.S. Corps of Engineers and the German Amborg-Sulzbach Bavarian State Construction Office.

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US seeks dismissal of lawsuit

DETROIT — The U.S. government is asking a judge to dismiss a \$100 million lawsuit over the death of a Marine recruit from Michigan.

The government says military injuries or deaths can't be turned into federal litigation. Assistant U.S. Attorney Zak Toomey says Raheed Siddiqui's death was a "tragedy," and the U.S. Marines Corps has taken it "extremely seriously."

Siddiqui, 20, died in 2016 in Parris Island, S.C. The Marine Corps said he took his own life by jumping from a stairwell after a confrontation with a drill instructor. The Corps also said it uncovered widespread hazing of recruits and young drill instructors dating back to 2015.

Attorney Shiraz Khan says the Marines withheld information about conditions at Parris Island.

A judge is meeting both sides on Jan. 18.

Man sentenced in Army theft

NASHVILLE, Tenn. — A Tennessee man has been sentenced for his role in a conspiracy to steal and sell Army equipment from Fort Campbell, Ky.

The U.S. attorney's office in Nashville said Jonathan Wolford, 29, of Clarksville was sentenced Tuesday to three years' probation and ordered to pay \$2,000 restitution to the Army. Wolford pleaded guilty to conspiracy to steal and sell Army property.

Seven people, including Wolford, have pleaded guilty in the case. The eighth person, John Roberts, was convicted at a jury trial in August and sentenced to 15 years in prison.

Four people were sentenced in December and the rest this week.

From The Associated Press

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MILITARY

VA to shield vets from predatory lenders

By NIKKI WENTLING
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — The Department of Veterans Affairs will soon propose rule changes to its home loan guarantee program that aim to stop lenders from aggressively targeting and pressuring veterans to refinance their home loans, a VA official told congressmen Wednesday.

Members of the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs on Wednesday discussed the problem of some mortgage firms attempting to coerce veterans who use the VA home loan program into unnecessarily refinancing their loans, racking up fees and lengthening their debt repayment.

The practice, known as "loan-churning," was highlighted last year, when Ginnie Mae — a government-owned entity that aims to make mortgages more affordable — announced an investigation into lenders improperly pressuring veterans to repeatedly refinance loans with little or no benefit.

Loan-churning happens more often with VA mortgages than loans insured by other agencies, said Michael Bright, vice president of Ginnie Mae.

Jeffrey London, director of the VA loan guaranty service, said the agency is working on a remedy. The VA and Ginnie Mae formed a task force in October and drafted regulations that the VA plans to release soon for public comment, London said.

"If we cannot get a handle on this behavior, abusive lending will continue to affect our market and our program."

Michael Bright
vice president of Ginnie Mae

The regulations could include a requirement for a lender's refinancing to meet a certain tangible net benefit for veterans, like what the Federal Housing Administration already compels lenders to prove before refinancing loans that it insures.

London said less than 10 percent of lenders improperly pressure veterans to refinance their VA home loans and was adamant it's not a systematic problem.

"Of course, one veteran being misled or taken advantage of is one too many," he said. "We are compelled to act and make an impactful change."

London said the new regulations would be posted for review sometime this year. Ginnie Mae first discovered the problem at the beginning of 2016.

"I believe that 2018 will be a critical year for this issue," Bright said. "If we cannot get a handle on this behavior, abusive lending will continue to affect

our market and our program. That could create an environment where veterans are viewed as suitable prey for aggressive lending."

While reviewing recent months' of VA data, Ginnie Mae found a fixed-rate refinancing of a VA home loan generated approximately \$6,000 in fees for a veteran, and the average savings was \$90 each month — meaning it would take a veteran more than five years to break even on refinancing.

Bright called the situation "alarming" and "dangerous market behavior" that also impacts the rates paid by FHA and Department of Agriculture borrowers.

In December, Ginnie Mae established a rule that no refinances would be permitted within the first six months of a home loan.

Lawmakers told London on Wednesday that as the VA generates more rules to combat the problem, they would support the initiatives in Congress, if legislative action is needed.

"Continue in your efforts, as you described, to tighten up in this space," said Rep. Jodey Arrington, R-Texas. "We've heard stories of veterans receiving dozens of solicitations from certain lenders in the immediate weeks after closing on their homes, leading some to believe they will pay less cash if they refinance. But the veteran can end up paying much more than they can ultimately afford. These practices are troubling."

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SpaceX denies losing spy satellite

By SAMANTHA MASUNAGA
Los Angeles Times

LOS ANGELES — SpaceX President Gwynne Shotwell pushed back against reports that her company's Falcon 9 rocket may have malfunctioned during Sunday's launch of a classified spy satellite.

News reports said the satellite, named Zuma, may have plunged back toward Earth. But Shotwell reiterated in a statement Tuesday morning that "after review of all data to date, Falcon 9 did everything correctly on Sunday night."

"If we or others find otherwise based on further review, we will report it immediately," she said. "Information published that is contrary to this statement is categorically false."

The loss, if it was determined to be a failure of SpaceX hardware, could be a "real threat" to the company's future defense business, said Loren Thompson, defense analyst at the Lexington Institute.

Reports began to trickle in Monday afternoon that Zuma, which was said to be worth more than \$1 billion, may have been lost after it was launched Sunday from Cape Canaveral Air Force Station in Florida aboard a SpaceX rocket.

Asked to comment, SpaceX issued a statement Monday afternoon: "We do not comment on missions of this nature; but as of right now reviews of the data indicate Falcon 9 performed nominally."

A spokesman for Northrop Grumman Corp., which built the satellite, said Monday: "This is a classified mission. We cannot comment on classified missions." The company did not respond to additional requests for comment Tuesday.

Zuma was built for the U.S. government, although it is unclear which part of the government.

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GOOD TIMES, FRONT AND CENTER

WAR ON TERRORISM

Attacks reveal cracks in Russia's defenses in Syria

By Liz Sly

The Washington Post

BEIRUT — A series of mysterious attacks against the main Russian military base in Syria, including one conducted by a swarm of armed miniature drones, has exposed Russia's continued vulnerability in the country despite recent claims of victory by President Vladimir Putin.

The attacks have also spurred a flurry of questions over who may be responsible for what amounts to the biggest military challenge yet to Russia's role in Syria, just when Moscow is seeking to wind its presence down.

In the most recent and unusual of the attacks, more than a dozen armed drones descended from an unknown location in the early hours of Saturday morning onto Russia's vast Hemeimeem air base in northwestern Latakia province, the headquarters of Russia's military operations in Syria.

Russia said that it shot down some of the 13 drones and used electronic countermeasures to safely bring down the others, and that no serious damage was caused.

The drone attack came less than a week after two Russian servicemen were killed in a sustained mortar assault on the same base which appears to have caused some damage to Russian military assets.

The Russian Defense Ministry denied a report in the Russian Kommersant publication that seven warplanes were put out of action in the mortar attack, including two of its premier Su-35 fighter jets and four Su-24 attack aircraft, losses that would represent the worst single day for the Russian air force in decades. A

“They thought the base was secure, but now it seems it is vulnerable.”

Maxim Suchkov

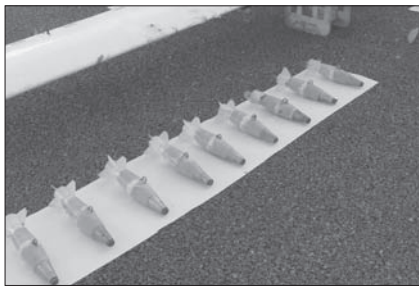
Russian International Affairs Council

Russian journalist posted photographs of damage that suggested at least some planes had been hit. Taken together, the drone and mortar attacks appear to represent the most concerted assault on the Russian headquarters in Syria since the military intervention in September 2015, which broadly succeeded in its goal of shoring up President Bashar Assad's fight to suppress the 7-year-old rebellion against his rule. There was also a smaller drone attack on Russia's long-standing naval base at the Mediterranean port of Tartus at the same time as the Hemeimeem attack, the Defense Ministry said, and a smaller mortar attack against Hemeimeem was reported by Syrian media Dec. 27.

The Hemeimeem base, the heart of Russia's military operations in Syria, is deep in Syrian government-held territory and until now had seemed immune to attack, said Maxim Suchkov, of the Russian International Affairs Council, who also writes for the publication Al-Monitor.

“They thought the base was secure, but now it seems it is vulnerable,” he said. Among the questions being asked in Moscow, he said, are whether the Russian military had adequately secured the base and whether it had failed to detect the acquisition of new technology by its adversaries.

The attacks also raise ques-



PHOTOS BY RUSSIAN DEFENCE MINISTRY PRESS SERVICE/AP

Mortar shells are lined up next to one of the drones that was forced to land after an unsuccessful attack attempt on Russian assets at Hemeimeem air base in Syria.

tions about the sustainability of Russia's gains in Syria, said Jennifer Cafarella, of the Washington-based Institute for the Study of War. In December, Putin visited the Hemeimeem base and said Russia would start to wind its presence down because the war in Syria is essentially over.

The events of recent days are a demonstration “that whoever conducted these attacks can still penetrate regime areas and impose costs on the Russians,” she said. “The gains the regime has made are not secure and are at high risk of being temporary.”

Perhaps the biggest question of all is who was responsible. What makes the attacks especially unusual is that there has been no claim, triggering a frenzy of speculation in the Russian and Syrian news media over who may have carried them out.

Russia's Defense Ministry on Tuesday appeared to accuse the United States of supplying the technology for the drone attack, saying that assault required a higher level of expertise than any armed group in Syria is known to possess.

Compounding the suspicions, the ministry said in a statement on its Facebook page that a U.S. Poseidon reconnaissance aircraft was in the skies above the area for four hours during the drone assault.

Pentagon spokesman Eric Pahon said the allegation was “absolutely false.” Islamic State

has often used armed drones against U.S.-allied forces in eastern Syria and Iraq without “significant impact” he said, adding that small drones are readily available commercially.

But the nearest ISIS positions are hundreds of miles away from the western coastal province where Hemeimeem is located, making the group one of the more unlikely culprits.

Most of the ISIS drones used against U.S. allies, moreover, had a range of no more than 1 to 2 kilometers, according to an analysis by the defense consultancy IHS Markit group. The Russian Defense Ministry statement said the drones used in the Hemeimeem attack came from between 50 and 100 kilometers away, making them far more sophisticated and expanding the pool of potential suspects, the IHS analysis said.

One of the myriad Syrian opposition groups in the most probable suspect, Suchkov said. But, none of the rebel groups is known to be within mortar range of the base, and they typically assert responsibility for all their operations. “If it was the opposition, they tend to put everything online and boast about it,” he said.

Among the theories circulating widely is that disgruntled Alawites from Assad's own minority sect were responsible. A statement about the attacks on the base, which is in a predominantly Alawite area, was posted online in the name of a shadowy group called the Free Alawites Movement. It warned Alawites who support the Syrian regime that the attacks proved Assad's hold on power is not secure but did not explicitly claim that it carried out the attacks.

A number of Alawite opposition members said they did not think the group is real and speculated that foreign intelligence agencies are seeking to create the impression of strife among regime loyalists.

Another claim made in Syrian opposition news outlets is that an Iranian-backed militia fighting on behalf of the regime and located in the government-controlled hills nearby, was responsible. According to that theory, Iran wants to thwart Russia's efforts to impose a peace settlement on Syria that would undermine Iranian interests.

“There are so many theories,” Suchkov said. “But it's a mystery at the moment.”

Soldier killed in Iraq is identified

By Chad Garland

Stars and Stripes

A U.S. soldier who died while supporting the anti-Islamic State coalition in Iraq has been identified as Spc. Javion Shavonte Sullivan.

Sullivan, of Fort Mill, S.C., died Monday in Iraq's Al Anbar province in a noncombat incident, the Pentagon said late Tuesday.

His death is under investigation.

He joined the Army to “make a better life for his family, fight for his country,” Patricia Hackett, the soldier's aunt, told a local Fox News affiliate in South Carolina.

“It was just something he wanted to do.”

“He's gone, but looking at her, she's his twin. We will always see Javion in Mahogany.”

Patricia Hackett
soldier's aunt

The 24-year-old was married to the love of his life, Rayven, who he had been with for more than a decade, his aunt said.

The couple's

daughter Mahogany, 3, will carry on Sullivan's loving spirit, she said.

“He's gone, but looking at her, she's his twin,” she said. “We will always see Javion in Mahogany.”

Sullivan was assigned to the Fort Hood, Texas-based 16th Signal Company, 11th Theater Tactical Signal Brigade, which provides communications support to III Corps operations.

He is the first U.S. servicemember to die while supporting the anti-ISIS campaign this year, and the 22nd since Operation Inherent Resolve began in the fall of 2014.

Over the past three years of fighting, ISIS has lost nearly all the territory it once controlled in Iraq and Syria.

U.S. officials believe about 1,000 fighters are now operating in small cells in the desert near the Iraqi-Syrian border and in some of the cities that security forces have retaken and are continuing to clear and secure.

Thousands of U.S. and international troops continue to support the fight through training, advice, intelligence and precision fire support.

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One of the drones forced to land after an unsuccessful attack attempt is shown at Hemeimeem air base in Syria in this photo taken from the Russian Defence Ministry Press Service Facebook page on Tuesday.

MILITARY

Group pressures Army on wild horse roundups

By JANET MCCONAGHEY
Associated Press

NEW ORLEANS — Animal rights advocates want a federal court to make an Army base in western Louisiana stop rounding up hundreds of feral horses on land it owns or uses.

Fort Polk began escalating efforts in November, and some captured horses are treated poorly and many may be slaughtered, the Pegasus Equine Guardian Association said in court papers backing up its request for a preliminary injunction.

People and groups that might adopt the horses "are being arbitrarily rejected and removed from the potential adopter list, increasing the likelihood that 'kill

buyers' will be able to acquire the horses," the association wrote.

Justice Department spokesman Wyn Hornbuckle said in an email that the department cannot comment on pending litigation.

U.S. Magistrate Judge Kathleen Kay scheduled a hearing Jan. 30 in Lake Charles.

The association sued the Army and Fort Polk's commanding officer in December 2016 over plans to get rid of about 700 "trespass horses" the Army considers a safety risk in training areas.

Most of the horses are on about 48,000 acres in the Kisatchie National Forest — part of 90,000 acres of forest land that the base uses for training, U.S. Forest Service spokesman Jim Caldwell

has said.

The Army has lists of tax-exempt rescue groups and people interested in taking the horses. Its plan calls for notifying them after roundups of up to 30 horses. Any rescue group unable to take every horse from one roundup is struck from the list. Individuals who can't pick up the number of horses they commit to within five days also are removed.

The horses have been there for decades, possibly more than a century. Some people speculate that the herds are descended from Army cavalry horses. Monday's court filing, however, asserts the horses have roamed the area at least since the early 1800s. Fort Polk was founded in

1941.

In another court document, Jeff Dorson, head of the Humane Society of Louisiana, said he received complaints this month from tipsters who aren't Pegasus officers about inhumane treatment of the horses.

Pegasus has received other allegations that "current contractors or subcontractors are not treating the horses humanely, failing to provide adequate and non-moldy hay and sufficient clean food and water, using inhumane round-up techniques, or engaging in practices that will favor moving the horses to kill buyers over animal welfare organizations or humane adopters," the organization said.

One contractor or subcontractor, Jacob Thompson, "has been in legal trouble with the Louisiana Department of Agriculture, State of Texas, and State of Oklahoma for abuse, theft or other violations involving livestock," according to Pegasus' filing.

Thompson was fined \$3,150 on Friday for violating five Louisiana regulations including selling livestock without a permit, Veronica Mossgrove, spokeswoman for the Louisiana Department of Agriculture and Forestry, said in an email. She said his only state-licensed business is Thompson Horse Lot.

The lot's Facebook page states that it's in Pitkin, which is near Fort Polk.

Overdue Pentagon financial audit could cost nearly \$1B

By CLAUDIA GRISALES
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — A panel of House lawmakers expressed a mix of frustration and relief Wednesday in telling the Pentagon's top financial chief that the Defense Department's first comprehensive review of its spending habits is late but heavily anticipated.

The comments were part of the first hearing this year of the House Armed Services Committee, which focused on the progress of the Defense Department's massive financial audit underway.

The effort won't be cheap. The audit, called the Financial Improvement and Audit Remediation, will cost \$367 million, Pentagon Chief Financial Officer David Norquist testified Wednesday.

In addition, it will cost an estimated \$551 million or more to address a long list of fixes uncovered by auditors, such as addressing computer software failures and glitches tracking inventory. That brings the overall tally close to \$1 billion.

Still, lawmakers lauded the effort, saying it will set the stage for a new level of fiscal accountability at the Pentagon for years to come and reverse trends of financial waste that have plagued the department.

"To say that it's not worth doing is like saying, 'Hey, we've screwed it up so bad for so long, the cost of fixing it has just become over-

whelming. So let's just keep screwing it up,'" said Rep. Adam Smith, of Washington, the ranking Democrat on the committee. "I get the upfront cost is going to be enormous, but ... if we got to suck it up for a couple of years ... to get back on track, it's going to make significant improvements."

In a more than hourlong hearing detailing the first public update of the Pentagon's progress for its inaugural audit, Norquist told lawmakers that the effort will mark a cultural shift at the Pentagon. The audit, which is now required by law under the National Defense Authorization Act, is aimed for completion by Nov. 15.

"This may be one of the most important things we accomplish during our terms here in Congress," said Rep. Bradley Byrne, R-Ala. "You will see a lot of support for your activities here on this committee."

The undertaking will entail the work of an estimated 1,200 auditors who will dig into the count, location and condition of military equipment, real property and inventory, Norquist testified. The audit will also examine security vulnerabilities in the Pentagon's business systems, validate the accuracy of personnel records such as promotions and assess whether the department's books and records present a true and accurate picture of financial health, said Norquist, who was previously CFO for the Department of Homeland Security.

Audits aren't entirely new to the Pentagon, where numerous reviews of performance and contract costs have been conducted by the Government Accountability Office, the Defense Contract Audit Agency, the Department of Defense Office of the Inspector General and the services' audit agencies, Norquist said. But this Pentagon audit will occur annually and mark a much more comprehensive review, he said.

Norquist, however, warned it will take time to implement necessary process and system changes to pass the audit, as in the case for Homeland Security, which took 10 years to get the first, clean result.

Rep. Mac Thornberry, R-Texas, who is chairman of the House Armed Services Committee, agreed the first audit will present a difficult challenge but supports the plan in hopes that it will head off years of wasteful spending.

"We should never assume that

an audit will solve the problems of waste and inefficiency. But it seems to me that an essential requirement of spending money smarter is knowing with certainty how it is being spent," he said. "It is likely that the result of the first audit will not be pretty, but those results will help direct us all — Congress and the (Defense) Department — on where we need to apply our efforts to improve. This is important, and this committee will continue to pursue it."

The \$367 million price tag to perform the audit comprises accounting firm fees totaling \$181 million and another \$186 million for infrastructure to support the audits. The accounting firm fees mark less than 1 percent of the Defense Department budget and is equal to or less than what major Wall Street firms pay for their audits, Norquist said.

"On that scale of the enterprise, that money for accountability is money well spent," he said.

The additional \$551 million "is to fix problems that we find. I don't think operating in ignorance of the problems is the right way forward."

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MILITARY

Experts: US lags in tech, security race with China

By CLAUDIA GRISALES
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — In a sobering reminder of a U.S. lag in the tech-based national security race against China, a panel of experts told a House committee that the country faces an uphill battle to gain dominance in the field.

Among the newest challenges, President Donald Trump's anti-migrant rhetoric and a lack of focus from the White House on the technology initiatives, including artificial intelligence, are fueling worries the United States could now fall farther behind, several lawmakers and experts said.

This comes as the Pentagon remains largely occupied with fighting America's longest wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, at the potential detriment of developing future weapons, one expert told a House Armed Services Committee subpanel Tuesday afternoon.

"Despite significant efforts by Congress and the Department (of Defense), other nation-state actors have made advances in emerging technological areas that endanger, and in some cases obviate, U.S. technological superiority," said Rep. John Langevin, of Rhode Island, the ranking Democrat of the subpanel. Battle-field application of China's technological advancements, such as hypersonic speed, artificial intelligence and cybertools, "are absolute game-changers in areas where I believe the United States must maintain superiority."

The conversation marked a

'The Allies outproduced the Axis powers. That's not the era we are in today. Those are not necessarily the right metrics.'

Paul Scharre

senior fellow, Center for a New American Security

start reminder of the wide list of threats facing the United States from around the world aside from the 17-year war on terrorism as well as increasing worries of a nuclear engagement with North Korea.

The House Armed Services subcommittee on emerging threats and capabilities, which hosted Tuesday's hearing on China's pursuit of emerging and exponential technologies, has reviewed the country's advances in cybercapabilities, information warfare and weapons systems such as hypersonics and so-called directed energy weapons that can involve laser-based systems.

"China continues to increase their research and development investments at an alarming pace, and is rapidly closing many of their technology gaps," said Rep. Elise Stefanik, R-N.Y., chairwoman of the House subcommittee.

The White House's lack of attention on the China threat, and Trump's rhetoric on immigration, could be compounding efforts to keep China from gaining dominance, experts said. The rhetoric alone could drive innovations outside the United States, said Paul Scharre, director and senior fellow for the technology and na-

tional security program for the Washington think tank Center for a New American Security.

"I think it's too early to tell whether we will see significant damage from the current administration's policies" on immigration issues, Scharre said. "But the cultural perception is certainly damaging. People will say, 'Look there's too much uncertainty ... I am going to go elsewhere.'"

This comes as the White House has opted to appoint a director to its Office of Science and Technology Policy, or OSTP. And the office's division for national security appears to have no personnel, said Rep. Jackie Speier, D-Calif.

"I am concerned," Speier said. "The White House has not conveyed an alarm that this function is critical."

Dean Cheng, senior research fellow with the Asia Studies Center at the conservative think tank The Heritage Foundation, was critical of past efforts by the office to work collaboratively with China and said perhaps an empty seat is preferable. But other experts disagreed.

"The lack of leadership in the White House on this issue is a concern," said Scharre.

William Carter, deputy direc-

tor and fellow with the technology policy program at the Washington think tank Center for Strategic and International Studies, agreed.

"A lot of what was done in the Obama administration was ... to task people with gathering information to finding answers to some of these tough policy challenges," Carter said. "I worry that at the working level ... they are going have no one to report to when they find answers. Those were important questions we are going to have to answer, not just for national security purposes."

However, an organization shift at the Pentagon could refocus efforts on addressing the tech-based race with China, Stefanik said. This year, the Department of Defense is slated to re-establish its post for undersecretary of defense and research and engineering.

"It needs to be the prime mover to drive change and foster innovation within the department," Stefanik said. "The threats we face from China and others demand that we energize and organize our government to ensure that policy keeps pace with technology in order to define a national security and technology strategy, and to close the gap with China."

The Pentagon, for example, still faces a challenge thinking beyond the traditional defense industrial base.

"Their key metric is still metrics in steel, iron and people," Scharre said. "If you talk to the Navy, they are going to talk about ships, the number of aircraft carriers. If you talk to the Air

Force, they talk about the number of tactical fighter aircraft and bombers. The Army cares about the number of Army brigade combat teams. And those are the key metrics of national power. In World War II, that was a war won by steel and iron, right? The Allies outproduced the Axis powers. That's not the era we are in today. Those are not necessarily the right metrics."

China is increasingly relying on its own companies to advance their technological efforts, which could translate into economic gains and reduce its foreign dependency, Stefanik said.

Among China's national-level plans, the country is aiming to achieve dominance in artificial intelligence by 2030 and has a top-down, government-driven agenda to collaborate between industry, academia and civil society, she said.

"There are also obvious national security implications should they corner the market on advanced technologies critical to national security," Stefanik said. But China's technological dominance "is not a forgone conclusion. What we learn today and in future hearings must be translated into action — to inform and reform the Department of Defense in support of national level efforts so that the United States remains home to the world's leading experts, researchers and technological breakthroughs."

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Mattis: SecDef imparts lessons in talks with troops

FROM FRONT PAGE

In Mattis' telling, this insurgent's question showed he felt "the power of America's inspiration." It was a reminder of the value of national unity.

Mattis, now the Pentagon boss and perhaps the most admired member of President Donald Trump's Cabinet, is a storyteller. And at no time do the tales flow more easily than when he's among the breed he identifies with most closely — the men and women of the military.

The anecdote about the Iraqi insurgent, and other stories he recounted during a series of troop visits shortly before Christmas, are told with purpose.

"I bring this up to you, my fine young sailors, because I want you to remember that on our worst day we're still the best going, and we're counting on you to take us to the next level," he said. "We've never been satisfied with where America's at. We're always prone to looking at the bad things, the things that aren't working right. That's good. It's healthy, so long as we then roll up our sleeves and work together, together, together, to make it better."

The stories tend to be snippets of Mattis' personal history, including moments he believes

illustrate the deeper meaning of military service.

On a trip last month to the U.S. Navy base at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, and three domestic military installations, Mattis revealed himself in ways rarely seen in Washington, where he has studiously maintained a low profile. With no news media in attendance except one Associated Press reporter, Mattis made clear during his troop visits that he had not come to lecture or to trade on his status as a retired four-star general.

"Let's just shoot the breeze for a few minutes," he said at one point.

Another time he opened with, "My name is Mattis, and I work at the Department of Defense."

Mattis used stories to emphasize that today's news media means every military member needs to be ready to fight at a moment's notice.

He recalled the words of a Marine sergeant major when Mattis was just two years into his career.

"Every week in the fleet Marine force is your last week of peace," the sergeant major said. "If you don't go into every week thinking like this, you're going to have a sick feeling in the bottom of your stomach when your

NCOs (noncommissioned officers) knock on your door and say, 'Get up. Get your gear on. We're leaving.'"

By leaving, Mattis meant departing for war.

A recurring Mattis theme is that the military operates in a fundamentally unpredictable world. He recalled how he was hiking with his Marines in the Sierra Nevada in August 1990 when he got word to report with his men to the nearest civilian airport. Iraq's Saddam Hussein had just invaded Kuwait, and the Marines were needed to hold the line in Saudi Arabia.

In an exchange with Marines at Camp Lejeune, N.C., Mattis recalled sitting in the back of a room at the Pentagon in June 2001 while senior political appointees of the George W. Bush administration fired questions at a military briefers about where they should expect to see the most worrisome security threats. At one point, Mattis said, the briefers got so confidently amid all the uncertainty, the one place the U.S. definitely would not be fighting was Afghanistan.

"Five and a half months later, I was shivering in Afghanistan," Mattis said, referring to his role as commander of Task Force 58, a special group that landed in



ROBERT BURNS/AP

Defense Secretary Jim Mattis speaks aboard the USS Iwo Jima at Naval Station Mayport, Fla., last month.

southern Afghanistan aboard helicopters flown from Navy ships in the Arabian Sea to attack the Taliban in and around Kandahar. Regardless of how much they resonate with his young audience, Mattis' stories illustrate how he sees his military experience as a way to connect with troops who often feel distant from their political leaders. They also are a reminder Mattis' boss is one of the most politically divisive figures in recent history.

Speaking to troops and family members at an outdoor movie theater at Guantanamo, Mattis pointed directly to the political battles.

"I'm so happy to be in Guanta-

namo that I could cry right now, to be out of Washington," he said, adding jokingly that he wouldn't mind spending the rest of his tenure away from the capital. He said as soon as he gets back in the company of uniformed troops, he is reminded of why the military can set a standard for civility.

"Our country needs you," he said, and not just because of the military's firepower. "It's also the example you set for the country at a time it needs good role models; it needs to look at an organization that doesn't care what gender you are, it doesn't care what religion you are, it doesn't care what ethnicity group you are. It's an organization that can work together."

NATION

Bannon out as chairman of Breitbart, loses radio show

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Former White House chief strategist Steve Bannon is stepping down as chairman of Breitbart News Network after a public break with President Donald Trump.

Breitbart announced Tuesday that Bannon would step down as executive chairman of the conservative news site, less than a week after Bannon's explosive criticisms of Trump and his family were published in a new book.

A report on the Breitbart website quotes Bannon saying, "I'm proud of what the Breitbart team has accomplished in so short a period of time in building out a world-class news platform."

Trump lashed out at Bannon for comments made in Michael Wolff's "Fire and Fury: Inside the Trump White House," which questions the president's fitness for office. As Trump aides called Bannon disloyal and disgraceful, the president branded his former chief strategist as "Sloppy Steve," an apparent reference to Bannon's often unkempt appearance, and declared that "he lost his mind" when he was pushed out of the White House in August.

The president was livid about Bannon's remarks — not just at the insults about his family, but also at his former strategist's ap-



Bannon

parent intent to take credit for Trump's election victory and political movement, according to a White House official and two outside advisers.

not authorized to speak publicly about internal conversations.

After days of silence amid withering criticism from his former colleagues and his largest benefactor, Bannon tried to make amends. He issued a statement Sunday praising the president's eldest son, Donald Trump Jr., whom he was quoted accusing of treasonous behavior in the book. Bannon did not apologize for his criticism of the president's daughter and son-in-law, Ivanka Trump and Jared Kushner.

One ally said Bannon was telling people as recently as Monday that he expected to stay on at Breitbart. The breakup is also costing him his daily show on the conservative talk station on satellite radio network SiriusXM. The company said its programming agreement is with Breitbart, not Bannon.

Democrats' report warns of Russian meddling in Europe

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — A new report by congressional Democrats warns of deepening Russian interference throughout Europe and concludes that even as some Western democracies have responded with aggressive countermeasures, President Donald Trump has offered no strategic plan to bolster their efforts or safeguard the U.S. from again falling victim to the Kremlin's systematic meddling.

The report is the first from Congress to comprehensively detail Russian efforts to undermine democracies since the 2016 presidential election. It wastes no time in calling out Trump personally for what it describes as a failure to respond to Russia's mounting destabilization activities in the U.S. and worldwide. The report was obtained by The Associated Press in advance of its public release Wednesday.

"Never before has a U.S. president so clearly ignored such a grave and growing threat to U.S. national security," the report warns.

No Republicans on the Senate Foreign Relations Committee signed on to the 200-plus page report released by Maryland Sen. Ben Cardin, the committee's top Democrat. But even without GOP backing, the report's recounting of Russian operations in 19 European nations foreshadows the still-unpublished Senate Intelligence Committee's bipartisan inquiry into Russia's role during the 2016 U.S. presidential election.

Cardin said in a statement that he commissioned the report so Americans can see the "true scope and scale" of Russian President Vladimir Putin's efforts to undermine democracy.

"While President Trump stands practically idle, Mr. Putin continues to refine his asymmetric arsenal and look for future opportunities to disrupt governance and erode support for the democratic and international institutions that the United States and Europe have built over the last 70 years," Cardin said.

Cardin's inquiry lays blame directly on Putin for a "relentless assault to undermine democracy and the rule of law in Europe and

the United States." Concerned that Trump has failed to identify Russian aggression as a national rallying point, the report urges a "stronger congressional voice" in pro-democracy efforts and funding. The report calls for committee hearings and other bipartisan efforts to aid European nations in countering Russian aggression.

Some changes suggested by the report have garnered GOP interest, including the use of financial sanctions aimed at Russia and pressuring social media companies to be more transparent about Russian political messaging.

So far, the president has shown little interest in addressing Russia's activities. During a November trip to Asia, where he met with Putin, Trump said "he said he didn't meddle" and added, "I really believe that when he tells me that, he means it."

Other administration officials have been more skeptical of Russian behavior. Defense Secretary Jim Mattis has said the U.S. is prepared to deter Russian aggression in Europe. The U.S. agreed last year to allow sales of anti-tank weapons to Ukraine.

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STARS AND STRIPES

NATION

Search: 'All hell broke loose' overnight

FROM FRONT PAGE

Santa Barbara County spokeswoman Yanneris Muniz said early Wednesday as the search continued.

At least 25 people were injured, 50 or more had to be rescued by helicopters, and an undetermined number of others were missing, authorities said. Four of the injured were reported in severely critical condition.

The search was set to expand with the arrival of a major search-and-rescue team from nearby Los Angeles County and help from the Coast Guard and the National Guard.

Most of the deaths occurred in and around Montecito, a wealthy enclave of about 9,000 people northwest of Los Angeles that is home to such celebrities as Oprah Winfrey, Rob Lowe and Ellen DeGeneres.

Winfrey's home survived the mudslides. In an Instagram post on the same day many Democrats were talking about her for president because of her rousing speech at the Golden Globes, she shared photos of the deep mud in her backyard and video of rescue helicopters hovering over her house.

"What a day!" Winfrey said. "Praying for our community again in Santa Barbara."

A mud-caked 14-year-old girl was among the dozens rescued on the ground Tuesday. She was pulled from a collapsed Montecito home where she had been trapped for hours.

"I thought I was dead for a minute there," the dazed girl could be heard saying on video posted by KNBC-TV before she was taken away on a stretcher.

The mud was unleashed in the dead of night by flash flooding in the steep Santa Ynez Mountains, where hillsides were stripped of vegetation last month by the biggest wildfire on record in California, a 440-square-mile blaze that destroyed 1,063 homes and other structures.

Burned-over zones are especially susceptible to destructive mudslides because scorched earth doesn't absorb water well and the land is easily eroded when there are no shrubs.

Authorities had been bracing for the possibility of catastrophic flooding because of heavy rain in the forecast for the first time in 10 months. Evacuations were ordered beneath recently burned areas of Santa Barbara, Ventura and Los Angeles counties.

But only an estimated 10 to 15 percent of people in a mandatory evacuation area of Santa Barbara County heeded the warning, authorities said.

U.S. Highway 101, the link connecting Ventura and Santa Barbara, looked like a muddy river and was expected to be closed for two days.

The worst of the rainfall occurred in a 15-minute span starting at 3:30 a.m. Tuesday. Montecito got more than a half-inch in five minutes, while Carpinteria received nearly an inch in 15 minutes.

"All hell broke loose," said Peter Hartmann, a dentist who moonlights as a news photographer for the local website Noozhawk. "Power lines were down, high-voltage power lines. The large aluminum poles to hold those were snapped in half. Water was flowing out of water mains and sheared-off fire hydrants."

Hartmann watched rescuers revive a toddler pulled unresponsive from the muck.

"It was a freaky moment to see her just covered in mud," he said.



Above: A structure is smashed against a tree along Hot Springs Road in Montecito, Calif., after getting hit by a flash flood and debris flow on Tuesday. Several homes were swept away when mud and debris roared into neighborhoods in Montecito.

Right: Mitchell Barrett crosses mud from an overflow creek on Sheffield Drive in Montecito, Calif., following the heavy rain. Barrett was going to check on his parents' house in Montecito.

PHOTOS BY DANIEL DREIFUSS, ABOVE, AND MICHAEL OWEN BAKER, RIGHT/AP



Cars, homes swept away by mudslides

By CHRISTOPHER WEBER
Associated Press

LOS ANGELES — In the dark of night, Thomas Tighe saw two vehicles slowly being swept away by a river of mud and debris flowing down the road in front of his house in Montecito, Calif. Daybreak brought a more jarring scene: a body pinned against his neighbor's home by a wall of muck.

Tighe is CEO of Direct Relief, a Santa Barbara, Calif.-based charitable organization that helps disaster victims. This time, the disaster was "literally in my backyard, and front yard," he said by phone from Montecito, about 90 miles northwest of Los Angeles.

The scene left Tighe shaken. His voice quivered and he paused several times as he described seeing the body, repeating several times it's "just so devastating."

At least 15 people were killed Tuesday as homes were swept away in the debris flow that formed as rain rushed off hills in Montecito left bare last month by the state's largest wildfire.

Those killed included Roy Rohter, a

former real estate broker who founded St. Augustine Academy, a Catholic K-12 school in Ventura, Headmaster Michael Van Hecke told The Associated Press.

"Roy believed intensely in the power of a Catholic education," Van Hecke said. "He's been a deep supporter of the school in every way and a mentor to me personally, to the faculty and to the kids."

Rohter's wife, Theresa, was rescued by firefighters from their home and was taken to a hospital with several broken bones, Van Hecke said.

Last month the Rohters were among thousands forced from their home by the wildfire and they spent a week living with Van Hecke and his family.

Tighe, whose charity provided breathing masks to residents during the fire, said he was outside his home around 3:30 a.m. checking downspouts when the rain intensified.

"I came around the house and heard a deep rumbling, an ominous sound that I knew was the boulders moving as the mud was rising," he said.

Two of his cars that had been in the driveway already were swept away, and

he saw two other vehicles drifting down the road.

With his street thick with rushing mud it was too late to heed the area's voluntary evacuation advisory so he woke his wife and children and prepared to get them up to the roof.

"I tried not to panic them, but I panicked them," Tighe said.

For the next three hours he and his neighbors did what they could to keep their houses from being inundated. When daylight came the devastation came into focus.

He watched in shock as rescuers plucked a family from their roof, where they had been huddled for several hours with a 3-month-old child. There were car-sized boulders and chunks of buildings on the street.

Tighe and his family trudged through thigh-deep mud to his sister's nearby house. Just one street away, it was a dramatically different scene. No debris, just puddles.

"Everything was fine," Tighe said.

NATION



KATC-TV/AP

Teacher Deyshia Hargrave is handcuffed Monday by a city marshal after being ordered to leave a Vermilion Parish School Board meeting in Abbeville, La., at which she questioned pay policies.

La. teacher handcuffed and arrested after pay query at board meeting

By KEVIN MCGILL
Associated Press

NEW ORLEANS — A Louisiana teacher was removed from a school board meeting, forcibly handcuffed and jailed after questioning pay policies during a public comment period Monday. The teacher's union and the ACLU are investigating and two board members are complaining that the board treats women unfairly.

A video posted by KATC-TV shows middle-school English teacher Deyshia Hargrave complying with a city marshal's orders to leave Monday night's Vermilion Parish School Board meeting in Abbeville, west of New Orleans. Next, she is seen on the hallway floor, screaming as the marshal handcuffs her behind her back.

"Stop resisting," the marshal says, hustling Hargrave toward an exit after lifting her to her feet.

"I am not; you just pushed me to the floor," Hargrave responds.

Hargrave later bonded out of the Abbeville jail on charges of "remaining after being forbidden" and resisting an officer, according to KATC.

The station reported that board president Anthony Fontana had ruled Hargrave out of order for asking questions during a time reserved for public comment. Later in the same meeting, she spoke again in response to a question from the board, and was confronted by the marshal despite objections from the audience. "She was recognized!" several people said.

Women have several times

been told to leave meetings, while men who speak out have not been removed, board member Laura LeBeauf told The Associated Press in a telephone interview on Tuesday.

"When she realized she had to get out, she picked up her purse and walked out," LeBeauf said. "Women in this parish are not getting the same treatment."

The board's other female members expressed similar sentiments.

"No reason for anyone to be treated this way. So far in 3 years, only women have been removed from board room meetings," Sara Duplexchain wrote in an emailed response to AP's questions.

It remains unclear why Hargrave was handcuffed. In a longer video posted on YouTube by a reporter for the Abbeville Meridian, the officer is heard telling Hargrave outside the building that he had given her "many lawful orders to leave."

"And that's exactly what I was doing," Hargrave insists.

Neither the board president nor Superintendent Jerome Puyau returned phone calls or emails seeking comment. Puyau told media in southwest Louisiana that the school system would not seek to have Hargrave prosecuted.

Long-standing divisions on the eight-member school board preceded the meeting, according to LeBeauf and board member Kibbie Pillette, both of whom said that a new contract for Puyau gives him the opportunity to earn as much as \$38,000 more per year, while the board hasn't raised teacher salaries in more than a decade.

Court: NC lawmakers must redraw gerrymandered map

Associated Press

RALEIGH, N.C. — Federal judges ruled Tuesday that North Carolina's congressional district map drawn by legislative Republicans is illegally gerrymandered because of excessive partisanship that gave the GOP a rock-solid advantage for most seats and must quickly be redone.

The ruling marks the second time this decade that the GOP's congressional boundaries in the state have been thrown out by a three-judge panel. In 2016, another panel tossed out two majority black congressional districts initially drawn in 2011, saying there was no justification for using race as the predominant factor in forming them. The redrawn map was the basis for a new round of lawsuits.

The latest lawsuit — filed by election advocacy groups and Democrats — said the replacement for the racial gerrymander also contained unlawful partisan gerrymanders. Those who sued argued that Republican legislators went too far when they followed criteria designed to retain the party's 10-3 majority in the state delegation.

Tuesday's ruling marks the first time a congressional plan was struck down on partisan gerrymandering claims, according to Allison Riggs, an attorney representing the League of Women Voters of North Carolina and other plaintiffs.

All three judges agreed the "invidious partisan-

ship" in the plan violated the Constitution's equal protection provision and directed to the state to hold congressional elections because it took the power to elect their representatives away from the people.

"We find that the General Assembly drew and enacted the 2016 plan with intent to subordinate the interests of non-Republican voters and entrench Republican control of North Carolina's congressional delegation," U.S. Circuit Court Judge Jim Wynn wrote in the majority opinion. Wynn added that the evidence shows the "plan achieved the General Assembly's discriminatory partisan objective."

The judges ordered the General Assembly to approve another set of districts by Jan. 24. Candidate filing for the November congressional elections begins Feb. 12, with primaries set for early May. A majority of the judges also agreed the panel would hire a redistricting expert to draw replacement boundaries if the legislature won't.

Through a spokeswoman, Senate Redistricting Committee Chairman Ralph Hise of Mitchell County said lawmakers plan to appeal.

At the time of the 2016 debate, according to the order, House redistricting chief Rep. David Lewis attempted to justify the criteria by saying: "I think electing Republicans is better than electing Democrats. So I drew this map to help foster what I think is better for the country."

Judge blocks end of 'Dreamer' program

Associated Press

SAN FRANCISCO — A federal judge Tuesday night temporarily blocked the Trump administration's decision to end a program protecting young immigrants from deportation.

U.S. District Judge William Alsup granted a request by California and other plaintiffs to prevent President Donald Trump from ending the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program while their lawsuits play out in court.

Alsup said lawyers in favor of DACA clearly demonstrated that the young immigrants "were likely to suffer serious, irreparable harm" without court action. The judge also said the lawyers have a strong

chance of succeeding at trial.

DACA has protected about 800,000 people who were brought to the U.S. illegally as children or came with families who overstayed visas. The program includes hundreds of thousands of college-age students.

U.S. Attorney General Jeff Sessions announced in September that the program would be phased out, saying former President Barack Obama had exceeded his authority when he implemented it in 2012.

On Tuesday, the Department of Justice said the judge's decision doesn't change the fact that the program was an illegal circumvention of Congress, and it is within the agency's power to end it.

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NATION

Former Sheriff Arpaio to run for Ariz. Senate seat

Announcement shakes up race to fill spot being vacated by Flake

By JACQUES BILLEAUD AND ANITA SNOW
Associated Press

PHOENIX — Former Arizona Sheriff Joe Arpaio's announcement that he'll run for the Senate seat being vacated by fellow Republican Jeff Flake potentially pits two conservative, pro-President Donald Trump candidates against each other and could create an opening for a more moderate GOP contender to take the seat.

Arpaio made the announcement Tuesday, injecting new uncertainty and attention into the race that's already among the year's most-watched.

If Arpaio follows through, and files his candidacy papers, the race could feature one of Trump's most vocal supporters trying to replace one of his fiercest detractors. Flake has constantly criticized the president.

Until now, the Republican front-runner in the race has largely been considered to be Kelli Ward, a former state senator. Arpaio's entry could hurt her chances.

"I think he would just suck up most of her support. He is a much more prominent and visible person, he's been around so long," said David Berman, a senior research fellow at Arizona State University's Morrison Institute of Public Policy. "Most people who like Trump generally gravitate toward Arpaio."

A Senate campaign by Arpaio, 85, also might aid a more moderate Republican by splitting the vote.

One possibility is U.S. Rep. Martha McSally, who colleagues say is planning a Senate run but has not made an announcement.

McSally has courted Trump's support in recent months while still presenting herself as middle-of-the-road. She is also seen as a strong GOP contender for the Senate seat in a possible run against Democratic U.S. Rep. Kyrsten Sinema, who represents Arizona's 9th District and has also positioned herself as a moderate candidate.

Zachery Henry, a Ward spokesman, said members of the campaign don't believe Arpaio would split the GOP vote to the detriment of Ward.



Arpaio

Ward, who lost a 2016 GOP primary to Sen. John McCain, has been endorsed by former Trump strategist Steve Bannon in her campaign to replace Flake.

However, she removed Bannon's name from her list of endorsements after Trump split with Bannon over comments in a newly published book critical of the president.

Trump posted a favorable tweet about Ward after she visited his Mar-a-Lago, Fla., resort around Christmas, but he has not formally backed her.

Asked Tuesday whether the White House would support Arpaio's candidacy, spokeswoman Sarah Huckabee Sanders declined to comment.

Arpaio's announcement caused some people to wonder if he is serious about a Senate bid or simply seeking publicity. He flirted with running for governor no fewer than five times over the years before finally abandoning the idea.

The former lawman said supporters urged him to seek public office again despite his crushing 2016 defeat following six terms as sheriff of the metro Phoenix area.

Last year, he was convicted of criminal contempt of court for intentionally disobeying a 2011 court order to stop his signature immigration raids. He was spared a possible jail sentence over the summer when Trump pardoned him for disobeying a judge. For decades, Arpaio was also known for jailing inmates in outdoor tents during Arizona's triple-digit summer heat and forcing them to wear pink underwear. His office also failed to adequately investigate more than 400 sex crime complaints.

Arpaio's re-election defeat came amid a crush of criticism over \$141 million in legal costs that Maricopa County taxpayers paid to defend him in lawsuits over his contentious immigration policies, deaths of inmates in his jails and a child sex abuse case botched by his agency.

The former sheriff said he would accept a Trump endorsement but wouldn't seek it. He also said Trump had not asked him to run for the Senate.

"If I go to my grave, I don't think I'd be happy if I didn't take the shot to run," Arpaio said.

"As time went on, I saw what was happening in D.C. — nothing is changing with the Senate," he said. "A lot of them go after the president."



MICHAEL CIGLIO, HOUSTON CHRONICLE/AP

Lindy Lou Layman, walking with her attorney, Justin Keiter, after a court appearance Tuesday in Houston, is challenging allegations she caused \$300,000 in damage to a prominent Houston attorney's art collection during a date.

Dallas woman denies causing \$300,000 in damage after date

By TOM STEELE

The Dallas Morning News

A Dallas woman denies charges that she ripped paintings off the wall and threw sculptures around at a Houston lawyer's mansion last month, causing at least \$300,000 in damage.

Lindy Lou Layman, 29, was arrested on a charge of criminal mischief Dec. 23.

Layman, whose LinkedIn profile says she works as a freelance court reporter, was at the home of Tony Buzbee in Houston's ritzy River Oaks neighborhood when police say the incident occurred.

According to a criminal complaint, Layman "tore paintings off the wall with her hands" and threw abstract sculptures across the room. She also poured red wine on the paintings, authorities say.

In all, three paintings and two sculptures were damaged.

In an initial court appearance, prosecutors said Layman was intoxicated after a first date with Buzbee and hid in his home when he called an Uber for her. She later yelled "I'm not leaving," before attacking the artwork, which included paintings by Andy Warhol, authorities said.

On Tuesday, Layman's lawyer, Justin Keiter, denied the charges after a court appearance.

"We certainly disagree with Mr. Buzbee's rendition of the facts when he spoke to the media, and we disagree with what was said in probable-cause court," Keiter said.

He called Layman a "great person" who is "weathering the storm of the intense media scrutiny," adding that he'd save her version of events "for the courtroom."

Layman is free on \$300,000 bond, and she is prohibited from having contact with Buzbee and using alcohol or drugs.

Buzbee, 49, a former Marine and a member of Texas A&M University's Board of Regents, has a history of making headlines.

Starting in 2014, he led Rick Perry's legal team as the then-governor was accused of abuse of power. Those charges were eventually dismissed.

In the run-up to last year's election, he hosted Donald Trump at the River Oaks mansion and donated \$250,000 to his presidential campaign. Buzbee later disavowed Trump after the release of the "Access Hollywood" tape in which the eventual president bragged about groping and forcefully kissing women.

Last December, a Harris County lawyers association questioned whether Buzbee received special treatment in having a DUI case dismissed earlier than is common for similar first-time offenses.

And just three months ago, the River Oaks homeowners association and Buzbee got into a public dispute over a working World War II tank he purchased and parked in front of his home. The tank is visible in a Google street-view image of the home.

Ala. selected for \$1.6B auto plant

By TOM KRISHER
Associated Press

DETROIT — Japanese automakers Toyota and Mazda have chosen the state of Alabama for a \$1.6 billion joint venture auto plant that is to begin operating by 2021 and eventually employ about 4,000 people, a person briefed on the factory said.

The manufacturing plant is to be built in the Huntsville area in Limestone County, said the person, who asked to remain anonymous because the site hasn't been officially announced. Officials in the Southern state said Alabama Gov. Kay Ivey was expected to make a major economic development announcement Wednesday, but they declined to elaborate.

Alabama and North Carolina apparently were finalists for the huge factory.

Toyota and Mazda are form-

ing a capital alliance and splitting the cost for the plant equally. The Huntsville area already has a Toyota engine factory that employs nearly 1,500 people. The decision to pick Alabama is another example of foreign-based automakers building U.S. factories in the South. The companies have located there due largely to lower wages and to avoid the United Auto Workers union, which is stronger in Northern states.

After reassessing the market, Toyota Motor Corp. has changed its plan to make Corollas at a plant in Guanajuato, Mexico, now under construction, and instead will produce Tacoma pickups there, Toyota has said.

President Donald Trump had criticized Toyota for taking auto production and jobs to Mexico. With the investment, both automakers hope to prove their good

American corporate citizenship and appease the Trump administration's concerns about jobs moving overseas.

But during the summer, Toyota President Akio Toyoda denied that Trump's views influenced his decision.

"We have been reviewing the best production strategy for our business," he told reporters in Tokyo at the time.

Toyota and Mazda Motor Corp. also plan to work together on various advanced auto technology, such as electric vehicles, safety features and connected cars, as well as products that they could supply each other, they said.

Working together on green and other auto technology makes sense as the segment becomes increasingly competitive due to concerns about global warming, the environment and safety.



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NATION

For mothers of sons, a teachable moment

Sex scandals are fodder for lessons

By DAVID CRARY
Associated Press

Of the many American women dismayed by the wave of sexual misconduct scandals, there's a subgroup with distinctive hopes and fears: mothers of boys.

Among them are women who have sought to raise their sons, sometimes from infancy, to shun sexist mindsets and be respectful of girls. Yet even some of these mothers worry about countervailing peer pressure their sons might face.

And there's uncertainty as to whether their sons' generation, as adult men, will be less likely to perpetrate or condone sexual misconduct.

Danielle Campoamor, a New York-based writer and editor, has been wrestling with these questions even though her son, Matthias, is only 3. She said she feels extra pressure because she was sexually assaulted five years ago by a co-worker.

"I worry what kind of man I'm raising and how he'll treat woman and girls in his life," said Campoamor, 30, who already takes Matthias to events where sexual misconduct is discussed.

"Does he understand? No," she said. "But it won't be a taboo topic later on. I hope he'll have the courage to stand up for what's right."

In a recent article for the website Romper, Campoamor wrote that the scandals provide a "teachable moment" for her and Matthias.

"It is my responsibility to provide him with concrete examples of what to do, and what not to do, when he witnesses, hears about, or is a victim of sexual assault," she wrote.

Neena Chaudry, education director for the National Women's Law Center, has taken her son, now 10, to pro and college women's basketball games in greater Washington since babyhood. Chaudry said he's now a devoted fan who extols the virtues of women's sports to other boys.

"It helps him see women as strong and formidable," Chaudry wrote for the law center's blog.

Family discussions

A Denver mom, Cynthia Boune, said she and her husband set out early in parenthood to raise their two sons to resist sexist attitudes.

With all the sexual harassment news, we've had a lot of family discussions and thank goodness our parenting style was validated," Boune wrote by email. "My boys were disgusted by the attitudes of predatory men."

She recalled an incident when her oldest son, now 18, was a high school freshman, and walked away when some soccer teammates laughed about a cellphone



Above: From left, Zaden Ruggiero-Boune, Cynthia Boune, Ron Ruggiero and Justus Ruggiero-Boune are shown in Wilton, Calif., in December 2016. Cynthia said she and her husband set out to raise their two sons to respect for women.

Left: Danielle Campoamor with her son, Matthias, 3, in Tomahawk, Wis., on Jan. 1, is already taking him to speaking engagements where sexual misconduct is discussed.

PHOTOS BY DESHAIR MONROE PHOTOGRAPHY, COURTESY OF THE RUGGIERO-BOUNE FAMILY (ABOVE) AND COURTESY OF DANIELLE CAMPOAMOR (LEFT)/AP

'Part of the solution'

California, a pacesetter in sex education, implemented a law in 2016 that included sexual harassment as a topic public school districts must address, starting in seventh grade. Women's rights activists welcome the requirement.

"Teaching boys how they can be part of the solution is tremendously important, and it has to start in lower grades," said Norreen Farrell, of San Francisco-based Equal Rights Advocates.

However, legislators and school officials in many states are wary of broaching such issues in curriculum.

"You need a lot of political will to do it," said Debra Hauser, of Advocates for Youth, which contends that adolescents need "accurate and complete" sexual health information.

Hauser, who has a son and daughter in their 20s, said there's a contentious argument nationwide over which traditional male behaviors are potentially harmful and which are worth preserving.

As for boys who harass and bully, "they aren't born that way," Hauser said. "They're reflecting the culture, the image of what a male should be."

Author Warren Farrell, whose books about gender issues include "The Myth of Male Power" and "The Boy Crisis," said efforts to curtail sexual harassment would benefit from more understanding

of the insecurities experienced by many boys.

"In high school, a 15-year-old boy, the less mature sex, is expected to risk the rejection of the more mature sex," Farrell said via email. "Having fewer social skills and being more likely to be a 'failure to launch,' he may feel overwhelmed, withdraw and fall addict to the world of internet porn."

Among Farrell's suggestions: more dialogue between the genders, and a greater balance in sharing responsibility for initiating sexual interest.

Amy Lang, a Seattle-based sex education expert, talks about sexual harassment issues with her 17-year-old son, including how he should respond to friends' sexist comments.

"You can say, 'Dude, that's not OK,'" she said. "But it's super hard to go against the tide."

She has learned how harassment can evolve out of now-commonplace sexting — boys sending explicit photos to girls, girls often reciprocating to their later regret.

"Many parents have their heads in the sand," Lang said. "It doesn't occur to them to tell their sons, 'It's not OK.'"

Several mothers expressed hope that harassment might abate as their sons' generation reaches adulthood. Among boys they know, they see a willingness to abandon some old gender stereotypes.

WORLD

Malaysia to pay up to \$70M if firm finds plane

PUTRAJAYA, Malaysia — Malaysia's government said Wednesday it will pay U.S. company Ocean Infinity up to \$70 million if it can find the wreckage or black boxes of Malaysia Airlines Flight 370 within three months, in a renewed bid to solve the plane's disappearance nearly four years ago.

Transport Minister Low Tiew Lai said there was an 85 percent chance of finding the debris in a new 9,653-square-mile area — roughly the size of Vermont — identified by experts.

The government signed a "no cure, no fee" deal with the Houston, Texas-based company to resume the hunt for the plane, a year after the official search by Malaysia, Australia and China in the southern Indian Ocean was called off. The plane vanished on March 8, 2014, while flying from Kuala Lumpur to Beijing with 239 people on board.

If the mission is successful within three months, payment will be made based on the size of the area searched. Liow said the government will pay Ocean Infinity \$20 million for 1,930 square miles of a successful search, \$30 million for 5,790 square miles, \$50 million for 9,653 square miles and \$70 million if the plane or recorders are found beyond the identified area.

Saudi prince sacked after criticizing arrests

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates — Saudi news websites are reporting that a prince who headed the kingdom's Maritime Sports Federation has been sacked from his post and replaced by a military officer.

The move comes after he purportedly made an audio recording calling the government's publicly stated reasons for arresting 11 princes "false" and "illogical."

After the audio was made public, state-linked Saudi news websites Sabq and Okaz reported Prince Abdullah bin Saud bin Mohammed had been fired.

Saudi Arabia's attorney general said the 11 princes were arrested for protesting a royal order to halt utility payments for royals.

Deneuve, others defend men's 'right' to seduce

PARIS — French movie star Catherine Deneuve and other prominent French women say men are being unfairly targeted by sexual misconduct allegations and should be free to hit on women.

Deneuve was among about 100 performers, scholars and others who signed an open letter published Tuesday by the newspaper Le Monde saying the "legitimate protest against sexual violence" stemming from the Harvey Weinstein scandal has gone too far and threatens hard-won sexual freedoms.

France is home to famed feminists and its own "me too" movement, and the Deneuve-signed letter drew much criticism. However, many echo Deneuve's concerns of a new "puritanism" that goes against French traditions of seduction.

From The Associated Press

Firm: Tanker crash survivors possible

Associated Press

TEHRAN, Iran — The Iranian company whose oil tanker burst into flames after a collision in the East China Sea says there is still hope of finding survivors as 31 crewmembers remain missing and rescue efforts continued Wednesday.

As the stricken Sanchin still lists after colliding with the Hong Kong-registered freighter CF Crystal late Saturday, a spokesman for National Iranian Tanker Co. told The Associated Press in Tehran that rescuers "likely" will find survivors.

"Since the vessel's engine room is not directly affected by the fire and is about 14 meters (46 feet) under water, there is still hope," spokesman Mohsen Bahrani said late Tuesday. "We are persistent working to put out the fire and rescue possible survivors."

The body of one of the 32 crewmembers

has been recovered and taken to Shanghai for identification, Bahrani said.

Mahmoud Abuli Ghasemabadi, the brother of missing Iranian sailor Ehasan Abuli Ghasemabadi, said he and other families remained hopeful for good news.

"I ask countries that are in that region and can offer any assistance to help us deal with this situation as soon as possible," Ghasemabadi said.

The Panamanian-registered Sanchin had a crew of 30 Iranians and two Bangladeshis, Chinese state media reported. The 21 members of the Crystal's all-Chinese crew were rescued.

What caused Saturday's collision in the East China Sea, 160 miles off the coast of Shanghai, remains unclear.

The Sanchi was carrying 150,000 tons, or nearly 1 million barrels, of condensate, a

type of ultra-light oil, according to Chinese authorities.

South Korean petrochemical company Hanwha Total Co., a 50-50 partnership between the Seoul-based Hanwha Group and French oil giant Total, said in a previous email to the AP it had contracted the Sanchi to import Iranian condensate to South Korea.

The tanker has operated under five different names since it was built in 2008, according to the U.N.-run International Maritime Organization. The National Iranian Tanker Co. describes itself as operating the largest tanker fleet in the Middle East.

It's the second collision for a ship from the National Iranian Tanker Co. in less than a year and a half. In August 2016, one of its tankers collided with a Swiss container ship in the Singapore Strait, damaging both ships but causing no injuries or oil spill.



ALESSANDRO DI MARCO, ANSA/AP

Avalanche cleanup

Rescuers remove snow from an apartment at the Sestriere skiing resort in the Italian Alps on Tuesday. Italy is warning of extreme avalanche danger in its northwest Alpine regions, while an avalanche hit an apartment building in Sestriere. No injuries were reported and the building was evacuated. High snow and other avalanches blocked roads and isolated villages in the Piedmont and Valle d'Aosta regions.

7.6 quake hits Caribbean near Honduras

Associated Press

TEGUCIGALPA, Honduras — A magnitude-7.6 earthquake struck in the Caribbean Sea between the coast of Honduras and the Cayman Islands on Tuesday night, shaking the mainland and causing officials to briefly post advisories warning of the threat of possible tsunami surges around the region.

There were no early reports of serious damage on land. Officials in Honduras said shaking was registered across much of the Central American nation and there were some reports of cracks in homes in Colon and At-

lantida provinces along the northern coast and Olancho in eastern Honduras.

The U.S. Geological Survey measured the quake at a preliminary magnitude of 7.6. The tremor struck in the sea about 125 miles north-northeast of Barra Patuca, Honduras, and 188 miles southwest of George Town, Cayman Islands.

The northern coast of Honduras closest to the quake's epicenter is sparsely populated, with much of it covered by nature reserves. The tremor was about 25 miles from Honduras' Swan Islands, which are unpopulated except for a small navy post.

President Juan Orlando Hernandez said via Twitter that Honduras had activated its emergency system and asked people to remain calm.

In the Cayman Islands, Sgt. Dave McKay, with Royal Cayman Islands Police, told The Associated Press that hazard management officials had not issued a tsunami alert but authorities were monitoring the situation.

Hector Pesquera, Puerto Rico's public safety secretary, said that authorities were monitoring the coastlines of 46 municipalities on the U.S. territory and that police were patrolling certain areas as backup.

Australian heat frying bats' brains

By AMANDA ERICKSON
The Washington Post

It has been a weird few weeks of weather. In North America, Canadians and Floridians alike shivered through freezing temperatures, bomb cyclones and a polar vortex. (It got so cold that iguanas froze and fell out of trees.)

Over in Australia, meanwhile, it has been hot. Sweltering, really. In Sydney, temperatures swelled to 117 degrees Fahrenheit on Sunday, the hottest it has been since 1939.

That oppressive heat, a side effect of climate change, has made life hard for the country's humans. Heat waves result in 10 percent more calls for ambulances and 10 percent more deaths, local experts said.

For some animals, it has been nearly unbearable. "Anytime we have any type of heat event, we know we're going to have a lot of animals in need," an animal specialist Kristie Harris told the BBC. It was so hot that possums burned their paws on roofs and roads.

And at least 500 flying fox bats died because of the heat.

The species' pups are particularly vulnerable, volunteer Cate Ryan said. "They have less heat tolerance," she said. "Their brain just fries, and they become incoherent."

The flying fox is the most populous bat species in Australia, though conservation groups say it is vulnerable to extinction. The bats play an important role in pollination and seed transportation.

More than 500 flying foxes have died of heat stress, according to the New South Wales Wildlife Information, Rescue and Education Service. At least 120 flying fox pups were brought in for hydration before being returned to their mothers. "Just like human babies, they're really vulnerable when they're young," Harris told the BBC.

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Officer sentenced for drinking at gun range

OH CINCINNATI — A Cincinnati police officer pleaded guilty to a probation violation for drinking alcohol during firearms training at a gun range.

WXIX-TV reported that the judge told Officer David Jenkins, 46, "You need to get a handle on it" before sentencing him Monday to continue his probation, undergo an alcohol treatment program and wear an alcohol monitoring device.

Court records show Jenkins had a .053 blood alcohol level at the training Dec. 20. He was on probation at the time for a disorderly conduct conviction.

He pleaded guilty to the charge after his arrest in March for carrying an AR-15 rifle and acting as a police officer while off duty and drunk.

Ex-firefighter sentenced for igniting another fire

MT HELENA — A former seasonal Montana firefighter who acknowledged that he deliberately sparked dozens of wildfires five years ago has been sentenced to 35 years in prison for starting another blaze in 2016.

The Independent Record reported that Helena resident James Frederick Maw was sentenced Monday. Maw lit 20 fires in 2013 in Montana, causing nearly \$1 million in damage.

He was arrested in the York-Nelson area in full firefighting gear holding a trigger-operated lighter. He initially said he was a contract firefighter but later said he started the fires because he enjoyed the camaraderie of firefighting and needed the financial payoff.

He received a 40-year suspended sentence for the 2013 offenses. While on probation, he was arrested in April 2016 for lighting a fire on a ranch where he worked.

Officer who used racial slurs during arrest fired

CT HARTFORD — A Connecticut police officer caught on camera using racial slurs while being arrested on a drunken driving charge has been fired from his department.

The Hartford Police Department said Robert Lanza, 44, was fired Monday. He had been under investigation since his arrest last year in Plainville.

Police said video and audio recordings show Lanza using several racial slurs. They said he also warned the Plainville officers arresting him not to come to Hartford.

Biologist protected from shark by whale

ME BRUNSWICK — A Maine marine biologist said footage of her swimming with a humpback whale shows the large mammal protecting her from a tiger shark.

Nan Hauser, of Brunswick, president of the Center for Cetacean Research and Conservation, told the Portland Press Herald she was in the Cook Islands when

THE CENSUS

30

The number of times a New York man has been arrested for impersonating a transit worker, stealing buses and trains and driving their routes. Darius McCollum took a plea deal Monday that's sending him to a mental health facility, not prison, for his latest escape. He had been charged with criminal impersonation and grand larceny in his most recent arrest, a 2015 case in which he was caught behind the wheel of a Greyhound bus. McCollum, 52, has been diagnosed with an autism spectrum disorder, which often includes repetitive behaviors and a difficulty with impulse control. He is obsessed with trains and buses. He befriended engineers and pilots, and first started hanging around the subway system as a child.



McCollum



ALAN WARREN, THE (OWENSBORO, KY.) MESSENGER-INQUIRER/AP

Wrapping it up

Joshua Michaels, of Owensboro, Ky., removes the star on top of the Christmas tree at Smothers Park on Monday as the removal of decorations began, signaling the end of the holiday season in the city.

she came face to face with a 25-ton humpback whale, which approached her and began nudging her around the water. She said the whale also shielded her with a fin.

She said that after the encounter, she noticed a tiger shark was swimming nearby.

Hauser said whales are "altruistic" and often hide seals from predators, but she has never experienced or read about anything like this before.

Vandals deface cafe advertising billboard

NH SOMERSWORTH — A billboard in New Hampshire that has raised eyebrows among Somersworth residents has been vandalized for a second time.

The billboard advertises the cafe Teatotaler and originally featured a male model eating a breakfast sandwich with the text "I like my men like I like my cof-

fee — with breakfast at Teatotaler." Foster's Daily Democrat reported that the original ad had graffiti stenciled over it sometime in September 2017.

A new advertisement, featuring the same model and the words "Chai curious?" replaced the old advertisement a few months later, but someone threw eggs at the billboard in the past few weeks. Cafe owner Emmett Soldati said they are still assessing the situation.

Father, son charged in theft of workers' tips

NJ WEST MILFORD TOWNSHIP — New Jersey police said a father and son spoiled the holidays for West Milford sanitation workers by stealing the holiday tips left out by township residents.

The 54-year-old father and his 28-year-old son, both of Hewitt, were each charged with two counts of theft Friday for taking cash-filled envelopes left outside local homes.

The Record reported that the envelopes were left on top of garbage cans on the morning of Dec. 22 as holiday tips for the township's contracted sanitation workers.

Police said the two stole a total of \$40, and that the father was additionally charged with a disorderly person offense.

Man knocks ice chunk off house, gets pinned

PA ERIE — Fire officials said a Pennsylvania man was lucky to survive being pinned by a huge chunk of ice that he knocked off the side of his house.

The Erie Times-News reported that Erie firefighters rescued the man Monday, chipping away at the 6-by-10-foot ice block and lifting it off the man's legs. He suffered only minor injuries to his right leg.

Officials said the man was trying to dislodge ice from the side of his house by hitting it with a shovel when the massive chunk suddenly fell. The man fell backward onto a wood pile, where bore the brunt of the ice's impact. Fire Chief Guy Santone said the man was "extremely lucky."

Editor fired for tweets about license option

VT BURLINGTON — The editor of Vermont's largest newspaper has been fired after a series of tweets about a state proposal to add a third gender option to driver's licenses.

Gannett, the owner of the Burlington Free Press, said former editor Denis Finley violated the company's social media guidelines.

Finley was criticized after tweeting about the possibility of adding a third gender option on driver's licenses. On Jan. 5, he tweeted: "Awesome! That makes us one step closer to the apocalypse."

From wire reports

FACES

A life in balance

Fresh from his historic win, actor remains rooted in family

Sterling K. Brown, a cast member in the NBC series "This Is Us," won a Golden Globe Award on Sunday for best actor in a TV drama series for his role on the show. He is the first black man to win in this category.

AP



By ALICIA RANCILIO
Associated Press

The morning after making history as the first black man to win a Golden Globe Award for lead actor in a TV drama, Sterling K. Brown fulfilled an acceptance speech promise: He took his 6-year-old son Andrew to school.

Brown said he was "humbled" by the Golden Globe win for his role on NBC's "This Is Us" and will "cherish it" all his life.

Family time is important to Brown, who also has a 2-year-old son Amare with his actress-wife Ryan Michelle Bathe.

"I did not have children so I could see them every three months," he said in a recent interview with The Associated Press.

He said their connection serves him as an actor.

"Young people infuse you with so much vivacity. There is so much to learn. Every acting school teaches you to get back in touch with the child inside of you. Once I became a parent it became easier to a certain extent because I was surrounded by it all the time," he said.

Brown, 41, plays devoted family man Randall Pearson who was adopted by white parents as a baby on "This Is Us." "I love his intellect, his heart and all of his corniness," said Brown, who won an Emmy last year for his portrayal of Pearson.

Brown will guest star on Fox's "Brooklyn Nine-Nine," where he will appear with Andre Braugher, the black actor

who won a leading-actor Emmy Award almost 20 years ago. "It exceeded expectations," Brown said of shooting scenes for the show.

He also has a role in "Black Panther," the Marvel movie about the first black superhero, scheduled to open Feb. 16.

"The level of production of a film with a predominantly African-American cast, it hasn't happened. It literally hasn't happened. There would be times I would be at base camp and you would see 24 trailers lined up one after the next, and you would see black faces coming out of those trailers one by one to go shoot something and there's pride," he said. "I would get misty."

Viewing parties are being scheduled around the country for "Black Panther," but the most important one for Brown is the screening that he'll have with son Andrew. "I'm a cinephile. I love going to the flicks. I remember going to see 'Superman' and 'Batman.' Now I get to take my son to go see 'Black Panther,' and Chad (Boseman) as Black Panther will be as normal for him as Christopher Reeve as Superman was for me," he said. "That means something. There's a normalization that occurs so you're not so starved to see images of yourself onscreen."

Brown says his method for choosing roles is to find projects that help him grow. He's trying to vary studio opportunities with stories that are more independent and character-driven.

Luis Fonsi, Daddy Yankee lead iHeartRadio noms with 7 each

From wire reports

"Despacito" dominated 2017, but it's still bringing success to Luis Fonsi and Daddy Yankee: The artists are the leading nominees at the iHeartRadio Music Awards.

iHeartMedia announced Wednesday that Fonsi and Yankee scored seven nominations each, including song of the year for the tune's version with Justin Bieber. The fifth annual awards show will be March 11 at the Forum in Inglewood, Calif.

A slew of artists are behind the Latin hit makers with five nominations each, including Bruno Mars, Taylor Swift, Rihanna, DJ Khaled, Shawn Mendes, the Chainsmokers, Ed Sheeran, Camila Cabello and Khalid.

Tracks battling "Despacito" for song of the year include Mars' "That's What I Like," Sheeran's "Shape of You," the Chainsmokers and Coldplay's "Something Just Like This," and "Wild Thoughts" by DJ Khaled, Rihanna and Bryson Tiller.

Franco says allegations he's heard aren't accurate

Facing accusations by an actress and a filmmaker over alleged sexual misconduct, James Franco said on CBS' "The Late Show" on Tuesday the things he's heard aren't accurate, but he supports people coming out "because they didn't have a voice for so long."

Franco's appearance came hours after The New York Times canceled a public event scheduled Wednesday that was intended to feature "The Disaster Artist" director and star and his brother and co-star, Dave Franco, discussing the film with a Times report-

er. The Times said in a statement that it had canceled the event "given the controversy surrounding recent allegations."

Franco said he supports the "Times Up" movement against sexual harassment and for gender equality. He said that "if there's restitution to be made, I will make it."

"I pride myself on taking responsibility for things that I have done," Franco told "Late Show" host Stephen Colbert. "The things that I heard that were on Twitter are not accurate, but I completely support people coming out and being able to have a voice because they didn't have a voice for so long, so I don't want to shut them down in any way. I think that it's a good thing and I support it."

"I'm here to listen and learn and change my perspective where it's off, and I'm completely willing and want to."

McGowan says legal action by Weinstein costing her house

Rose McGowan, refusing to mention Harvey Weinstein by name, said unspecified legal action by the man she instead calls "the monster" is forcing her to sell her house to fight him.

The actress-turned-activist spoke to TV critics Tuesday about her upcoming documentary series "Citizen Rose" and what she called her global struggle against sexual assault and economic injustice.

McGowan helped start a national public discussion when she accused Hollywood mogul Weinstein of raping her. Weinstein, facing numerous other accusations of misconduct, has repeatedly denied "allegations of non-consensual sex."

"Citizen Rose," debuting Jan. 30 on E!

refers only to Weinstein as "HW" or "the monster," said executive director Andrea Metz. In video remarks before the panel, McGowan asked reporters to refrain from saying Weinstein's name and to ask respectful questions to acknowledge her humanity.

She was asked if she had any qualms working for E!, which was called out on the Golden Globes red carpet by stars unhappy with E! host Cat Sadler's departure over pay disparity. The issue arose after she'd made a deal with the channel for a series, McGowan said, adding, "Let me hang out for a while and maybe things will change."

Frances Berwick, who oversees E! as president of Lifestyle Networks for NBC Universal Cable Entertainment, addressed the issue after McGowan's Q&A. Sadler, who said she quit E! because she was paid less than fellow host Jason Kennedy, had a different role than Kennedy and therefore a different salary, Berwick said.

Other news

■ CBS News has selected "Face the Nation" host John Dickerson for the "CBS This Morning" program, pairing him with current anchors Gayle King and Norah O'Donnell. Dickerson will no longer host his Washington-based Sunday morning political show. That sets him apart from ABC "Good Morning America" host George Stephanopoulos, who hosts ABC's "This Week" on Sundays. CBS had no immediate announcement of Dickerson's replacement on "Face the Nation."

■ Kensington Palace confirmed Tuesday that Prince Harry's fiancée Meghan

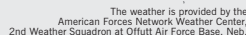
Markle has shut down her social media accounts in line with royal tradition. The palace said Markle "is grateful to everyone who has followed her social media accounts over the years" but she has not used these accounts since "wedding time."

■ Jimmy Buffett has been enlisted to help promote a regatta on the Caribbean island of St. Barts and show that life is returning to normal after a direct hit from Hurricane Irma in September. Buffett will serve as U.S. ambassador for the Les Voiles de Saint-Barth, April 8-14, a mainstay on the Caribbean yacht racing circuit. Buffett owns a villa on St. Barts that was undamaged by the storm. He said he's impressed with how the island residents are bouncing back and he's eager to help. Buffett played a free concert on the main dock in Gustavia on Dec. 27. Buffett will be on-site for the regatta but won't be sailing and isn't scheduled to play a concert.

■ "Girls" star and creator Lena Dunham and beau Jake Antonoff have called it quits. Dunham's rep confirmed to the Los Angeles Times on Tuesday.

■ American rapper G-Eazy has canceled a partnership with H&M after the Swedish clothing retailer was accused of racism over a promotional image of a black child dressed in a hoodie reading "coolest monkey in the jungle." H&M reiterated Wednesday its "humble apologies," adding "we have got this wrong."

■ NBC said Tuesday it's donating \$500,000 in grants to high school theater departments nationwide. High schools can submit applications at NBC.com/Rise through Feb. 6, with the winners to be announced in March.



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OPINION

Why Trump is likely to finish his term

By CARL P. LEUBSDORF

The Dallas Morning News

For the past week, Washington and the political world have been fixated on Michael Wolff's gossipy account of the chaos and dysfunction within Donald Trump's White House.

But the significance of Wolff's disclosures has been somewhat clouded by the media focus on such corollary issues as their long-term effect on Steve Bannon's influence, factual errors on some details, and whether the author violated disclosure rules in reporting top aides' devastating comments about the president's alleged shortcomings.

Unfortunately for Trump and the country, the true bottom line in Wolff's "Fire and Fury" isn't any of these but the way that, contrary to the president's protestations he is a "very stable genius," it reinforces prior doubts about Trump's competence, knowledge and stability. That leads to a more basic question: Can the political system cope with his shortcomings as it did a generation ago with Richard Nixon's misdeeds before he mishandles a major crisis such as a potential nuclear showdown with North Korea?

The U.S. has had incompetent or unsuitable presidents before, though not in the nuclear age. James Buchanan mismanaged the years leading up to the Civil War. Warren Harding was arguably the 20th century's worst president, but the country survived his scandal-ridden administration until he died two-thirds through his term. Barring that unlikely circumstance, the three ways Trump's tenure can end short of four years are impeachment, incapacity or resignation. None currently seems viable, though that could change during the next year. Here is why.

Impeachment. The Constitution says the House can impeach a president for treason, bribery or "other high crimes

and misdemeanors," but removal requires a two-thirds vote by the Senate. I still remember how Nixon's Senate liaison, Tom Korologos, walked the Capitol's corridors, sporting a 34 button that represented the number of senators needed to prevent Nixon's ouster.

With both houses under GOP control, impeachment is not currently a foreseeable option. Indeed, Republicans on the House Judiciary Committee, which would initiate impeachment, remain more fixated on spurring legal action against Hillary Clinton than exploring allegations against Trump. Two circumstances could change this: Democratic recapture of the House in November's election — a real possibility — and a recommendation from special counsel Robert Mueller alleging Trump committed obstruction of justice or other potentially impeachable offenses.

Even then, removal of this president would seem unlikely. Even if the Democrats win the Senate, less than a 50-50 prospect at present, the 67 votes needed for conviction would require 15 to 16 Republicans to back any impeachment resolution from a Democratic House. Korologos' 34 votes melted away only after evidence in White House tapes convinced enough senators Nixon was guilty, as well as a political liability. Without hard evidence, such a conclusion is less likely in today's more polarized partisan times.

Inability. The 25th Amendment provides for temporarily removing a president if the vice president and a majority of the Cabinet certify he is "unable to discharge the powers and duties of his office." But if the president sends a written declaration "no inability exists," he can resume office unless two-thirds of both houses vote he is unable to do so.

Politico reported last week that about 25 congressional Democrats and one Republican met with a Yale psychiatrist who contends Trump is dangerously unstable

and "going to unravel." Such sessions seem both politically foolish and substantively unproductive. McG as well as a national 2018 Democratic campaign promising Trump's impeachment.

Absent an especially egregious act, presidential inability proceedings seem unlikely unless top Republicans like House Speaker Paul Ryan, Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell and Vice President Mike Pence agree action is necessary.

So far, most congressional Republicans have put party and ideology first, refusing to place concerns about Trump on the record and content to maintain a status quo in which they can ratify conservative federal judges, back administrative actions reversing prior environmental and voting rights moves and satisfy their hard core by trashing Mueller and the Clintons.

Resignation. Many in the political community have speculated privately that, if the legal and political walls closed in, Trump might resign to protect his business empire rather than risk becoming the first president voted out of office (Nixon, facing certain conviction, resigned). But running from a fight hardly seems Donald Trump's way.

The bottom line is that all potential actions against Trump are complicated and currently unlikely to succeed. How and when that might change is simply unforeseeable now.

During the 2016 campaign, I became convinced the winner would likely be a one-term president because the country's partisan divisions and Washington's political gridlock would ensure a controversial, unpopular administration. Nothing since Jan. 20 has changed my view. Given Trump's often outrageous and unrepresentational behavior, many Americans would prefer not to wait that many years, but that still seems the likeliest outcome.

Carl P. Leubsdorf is a former Washington bureau chief of The Dallas Morning News.

Adding agents won't cure border patrol woes

By CHRISTINE STENGELIN
AND JOHN HUDAK

Special to the Los Angeles Times

Customs and Border Protection last year awarded a \$297 million contract for assistance in recruiting and hiring the 5,000 border patrol agents President Donald Trump believes we need to combat "the recent surge of illegal immigration at the southern border with Mexico."

Those numbers may please the Make America Great Again crowd, but it will be excruciating for the already qualified agents, or to deploy them effectively since the border is actually quieter than ever.

Under the Clinton administration, it took 27 applicants to yield one Border Patrol officer. And the hiring ratio has gotten worse. In spring last year, when Customs and Border Protection requested bids for private contractors to help fulfill Trump's order, it wrote that it now takes 133 applicants to hire one full-time employee.

A private contractor may improve on those figures by designing a new recruitment strategy and implementing it in labor markets that Customs and Border Protection hasn't previously tapped. The contractor may not repeat the agency's past mistakes, like spending millions on polygraph tests for applicants who have already admitted to disqualifying offenses like human trafficking. Still, it's a tough task. The contractor needs to find men and women who will be willing to work in remote areas, can pass the physical fitness requirements and haven't touched mari-

juana in at least two years.

But let's imagine that Customs and Border Protection succeeds in hiring, training and equipping all 5,000 new officers and manages to hang on to the roughly 20,000 agents it already has (which hasn't been easy up to this point). Are they as urgently needed as the extra 5,000 or will we have to believe that? The best evidence available tells us the answer is "absolutely not."

In 2017, the number of people apprehended at the border fell 26 percent compared with the previous year, and the totals haven't been this low since the Nixon administration. The "recent surge of illegal immigration" the southern border with Mexico," the president's basis for his border security push, likely reflects only a temporary rise in apprehensions from 2015 to 2016. If you zoom out, that's a blip in a long, downward trend, from more than 111,000 apprehensions in 2004 to fewer than 10,000 in 2017.

Besides, Customs and Border Protection itself doesn't even seem to know where it would be optimal to deploy additional personnel or whether they're needed at all. According to a special report from the Department of Homeland Security Office of the Inspector General, "Neither CBP nor ICE commingle complete southern border support the operational need or deployment strategies for the additional ... agents and officers they were directed to hire."

A suddenly larger law enforcement agency, with numerous new recruits and without a clear deployment strategy, isn't just a financial liability but a security risk. Another Homeland Security Inspector

General report found numerous problems with DHS agencies keeping track of and securing their equipment. Customs and Border Protection, for instance, did not have an accurate firearm inventory, and one agent left his gun in a backpack at a gym, where it was stolen. Adding an enormous number of employees to an agency that faces administrative dysfunction has no coherent plan to detail new agents will create a scenario in which costs will be high and benefits may be quite low.

There's negligence and inefficiency, and then there's actual malfeasance. In the spring of 2016, around the time Trump was getting to face administrative dysfunction about immigrants, the Homeland Security Advisory Council cautioned that Customs and Border Protection's disciplinary process was "broken." It urged the agency to hire an adequate number of internal investigators and described serious dysfunction in the handling of complaints and disciplinary cases.

For major areas of concern like domestic violence and alcohol abuse, it found that the agency lagged behind standard law enforcement practices. A host of harmful activities, from bribery to alleged sexual assault, have come to light and caused critics to call for Customs and Border Protection in the past.

The risk is that Trump's hiring surge at the border will please his base while accomplishing little and increasing the possibility of policy failure.

Christine Stengelin is a research assistant at the Brookings Institution. John Hudak is a senior fellow in governance studies at Brookings.

OPINION

Take notice: Trump's on right track on Iran

By ANDREW MALCOLM
Special to McClatchy

If you've got a minute to pause from your collective obsession with a gossip book of dubious veracity, here's an issue of compelling importance that reveals another side of this president and his administration: Iran and how Donald Trump addresses the deadly anti-regime demonstrations now convulsing that historic land that clearly is the linchpin of any future regional stability, or the opposite.

The last time such nationwide protests erupted there — the Green Revolution of 2009 — Barack Obama was painfully reluctant to involve the U.S., even rhetorically. His tardy and limp comments about peaceful demonstrations came only after congressional resolutions and John McCain's Senate tongue-lashing for their absence. Hillary Clinton later admitted, "We were too restrained in our support of the protests in June 2009, and in our condemnation of the government crackdown that followed."

Though there's little media attention these days, there's no confusion this time. "Oppressive regimes cannot endure forever," Trump has said. "The people of Iran are finally acting against the brutal and corrupt Iranian regime."

Vice President Mike Pence gave a lengthy interview to Creta Vay, *Sunday For Voice of America* to broadcast in Farsi: "We're going to continue to send, from the very outset of this effort on the streets of Iran, an unambiguous message that the American people stand with freedom-loving people in Iran and around the world." And in a similar interview to *Al-Manar*, where, "We stand with the proud people of Iran because it is right. And because the regime in Tehran threatens the peace and security of the world."



Supporters chant slogans and wave flags of the National Council of Resistance of Iran as they demonstrate outside European Union headquarters in Brussels on Wednesday.

Obama's abiding reluctance to confront Iran on anything was tied to his consuming desire for the nuclear pact he sought with Tehran, a leaky pact Trump has now declined to certify Iran is obeying.

Any president, especially one like Trump not known for nuance, walks a tightrope in these situations. He must make clear America's support for a people's democratic strivings without creating false hopes of direct U.S. intervention, as arose during the Hungarian Revolution of 1956, ultimately squashed by Soviet tanks.

Iran's second national uprising against the mullahs in three years is fueled this time by a different Iranian, once the regime's strongest pillar: Demonstrators now chant for regime change because the anticipated gains from more than \$100 billion in unfrozen funds were squandered on weap-

ons, foreign forays, terrorism funding and, likely, corruption.

Reporters seeking news offered Trump's spokeswoman an opportunity to reveal that her boss supports regime change in Tehran. Instead of taking the bait, she said carefully, "I think the ultimate endgame would be that the citizens and the people of Iran are actually given basic human rights, and he'd certainly like to see them stop being a state sponsor of terror."

Trump's tweets at North Korea's "little Rocket Man" draw instant media attention, even igniting speculations on the president's mental health. They reinforce a popular perception that this president is a loose cannon, a perception he sometimes seeks and feeds with unorthodox presidential behavior and statements.

What doesn't get reported so eagerly or

attributed to Trump's presidency are puzzling positive developments: Economic growth exceeding 3 percent by Trump's seventh month, unemployment falling to longtime lows, 1.84 million new jobs since Trump's inauguration, confident stock markets soaring to all-time highs, new homebuilding up, dozens of large companies granting bonuses and wage increases. Even Trump's job approval was climbing at year's end. How can so many things be going so well with an unbalanced usurper in the Oval Office?

Trump's firm stance on Iran's global export of terrorism and his sober conduct toward Iran's mullahs with the unnoticed absence, for instance, of offensive name-calling tweets go willfully unnoticed because such respect does not fit the favored anti-Trump narrative.

So, too, does his mutual decision with South Korea's president to suspend possibly provocative joint military exercises ahead of next month's Winter Olympics there. Or Trump's instantly implemented vow to crush Islamic State quickly, no longer organized fighting force. Or his carefully targeted response to Syrian use of chemical weapons on its own people. His imposition of new sanctions on Russia, sale of badly needed defensive weapons to Ukraine, U.S. troop deployments to Eastern Europe as a NATO commitment.

And the suspension of \$2 billion in aid to Pakistan for harboring terrorists, a firm consequence dodged by all recent administrations.

These and other actions demonstrating freshened resolve abroad suggest when it comes to foreign policy, friends and foes alike would do well to note that Trump follows words with action.

Andrew Malcolm is an author and veteran national and foreign correspondent covering politics since the 1960s.

Retention is key to solving US teacher shortage

By JOHN P. PAPAY,
ANDREW BACHER-HICKS,
LYNDSEY C. PAGE
AND WILLIAM H. MARINELL
Special to The Washington Post

Last fall, school districts nationwide faced serious teacher shortages that left many schools scrambling to find qualified teachers. Today, halfway through the academic year, many students are being taught by a temporary teacher because their schools could not fill positions in time — in Arizona, for example, more than 1 in 5 teaching positions remained unfilled four months into the school year, and an estimated 20 to 30 percent of teachers in urban school systems are hired after the school year starts. Projections suggest that the national teacher shortage is only going to get worse, particularly in hard-to-staff subjects such as mathematics, science and special education.

In response, policymakers have taken steps to loosen the academic year. In December, Virginia Gov. Terry McAuliffe passed emergency regulations designed to alleviate what he called the "growing crisis" of a statewide teacher shortage by streamlining education requirements for new teachers. Lawmakers in Arizona, Illinois and Minnesota have taken steps to increase the number of new teachers by lowering the teacher licensure requirements. States such as Oklahoma have staffed classrooms by providing record numbers of temporary emergency certifications. And, motivated in part by a call to ameliorate teacher shortages, New York state recently allowed charter schools to

certify their own teachers and dropped literacy tests for teacher candidates.

Although these efforts may prove to be helpful, they fail to address one fundamental root of the problem: School systems need to hire teachers in great numbers only if they don't retain enough of the well-qualified teachers they currently employ. Unfortunately, 15 years after Richard Ingersoll cautioned about the "revolving door" in the teaching profession, the challenge of teacher retention remains. This revolving door is not only expensive for schools and destabilizing for students, but it also contributes to inequality in educational experiences — students of color and those living in poverty are less likely to be assigned effective teachers.

Recognizing that better information is needed to understand and address this long-standing challenge, we conducted a large-scale study of teacher retention in a diverse set of 16 urban public school districts in seven states that together serve nearly 2.5 million students annually.

We found that on average, just over half of new teachers in the districts we examined remain in the classroom after five years. This finding largely mirrors prior research. What our work newly reveals, however, is substantial variation around this average. While turnover is a challenge in all of the districts we study, it's a real crisis in some. Our study documented five important trends about teacher retention.

First, across the districts, the share of novice teachers who left their district within five years ranges from just less than half to nearly 75 percent. This is an enormous difference in retention rates. The annual

hiring costs in the district with the lowest teacher retention rate would be about \$4 million lower if it retained novice teachers at the highest rate we observe. In an era of tight school budgets, these dollars can and should be better spent elsewhere.

Second, even when teachers stay in the same district, they frequently move across schools. In one district, half of novice teachers stayed in the district, but only 1 in 5 remained in the same school for five years. This building-level turnover means that schools still must invest resources to find and train new candidates. And there is good evidence that turnover can hurt students because it causes organizational instability.

Third, after teachers leave the classroom, their likelihood of returning varies widely by district. In half of the districts we examined, it is common for teachers to return after a temporary leave of absence, such as parental leave. In the other half, few teachers returned after going on leave. This suggests that struggling districts may benefit from human resource policies that encourage teachers to return after a leave.

Fourth, we found that few teachers depart the urban districts we studied for other districts in the same state. Thus, these urban districts can't necessarily point to their suburban counterparts as the drivers of their retention challenges.

Fifth, encouragingly, we found relatively higher retention among more effective teachers. Here again, however, we found considerable variation across districts. These differences imply an additional cost — lower student achievement — in districts struggling to retain their top performers.

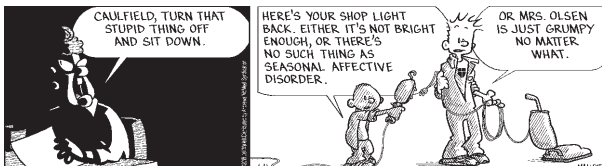
Our research revealed no obvious, simple way to improve teacher retention. The differences in retention rates that we saw across districts are not explained by easy-to-observe factors such as student demographics or teacher salaries. But related research shows that teachers leave schools with poor working conditions where they feel they cannot have success with their students, and they stay in schools where they focus beyond the core curriculum, their principals and their school culture. Working to build more supportive school environments can both help students and ameliorate the retention crisis plaguing some of our urban school systems.

With teacher shortages on the rise across the country, policymakers must expand their focus beyond policies that only increase the supply of new teachers. While such efforts might act as Band-Aids to solve immediate shortages, they alone will not address the roots of the challenge.

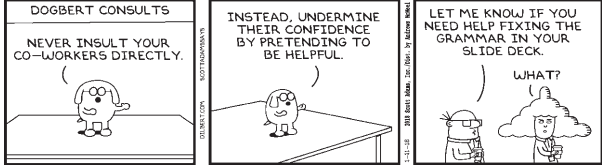
Our research shows that some districts are facing turnover rates that are unsustainable. With the right policies, they can rise and as states and districts make strides in promoting equal access to high-quality teachers for all students, a focus on teacher retention and attention to what conditions encourage teachers to stay at a particular school must be part of the solution.

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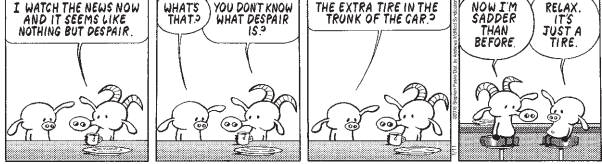
Frazz



Dilbert



Pearls Before Swine



Non Sequitur



Candorville



Carpe Diem



Beetle Bailey



Bizarro



Eugene Sheffer Crossword

1	2	3		4	5	6	7		8	9	10	11
12				13					14			
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		18				19		20				
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46	47	48			49		50					
51					52		53				54	55
56					57					58		
59					60					61		

ACROSS

- 1 Tin Man's need
- 4 Earring type
- 8 Bating practice area
- 12 One of us
- 13 Sea eagle
- 14 Cupid's specialty
- 15 Glistering
- 17 Novelist Anita
- 18 URL ending
- 19 Mountaintop access
- 21 Shriveled grape
- 24 QB's gains
- 25 "As I see it," in a text
- 26 Bit of advice
- 28 Pound fraction
- 32 Go sightseeing
- 34 Profit
- 36 Sandbox toy
- 37 Plus
- 39 Prattle
- 41 Acting coach
- 42 River blocker
- 44 Jam maker's need
- 46 Where there are no free spirits?
- 50 "Exodus" hero
- 51 Enjoy
- 52 Math course
- 56 Met solo
- 57 Crunchy cookie

DOWN

- 2 Popeye's Olive
- 3 Delectable
- 4 Recluse
- 5 Spanish gold
- 6 Burden
- 7 Irksome
- 8 Evokes
- 9 Mine, in Montreal
- 10 Blunder
- 11 Formerly, once
- 16 Lean- (sheds)
- 20 Altar promise
- 21 Actress Moreno
- 22 Hebrew prophet
- 23 French diarist
- 27 Identify
- 29 Captain
- 30 Nemo's sub
- 31 Field
- 31 Flair
- 33 Lucille Ball, for one
- 35 Spigot
- 38 Bar bill
- 40 Lighthouse light
- 43 Georgia city
- 45 French vineyard
- 46 Family
- 47 Ethereal
- 48 Leave out
- 49 Exceptional
- 53 Floral ring
- 54 Italian article
- 55 Tofu source

Answer to Previous Puzzle

B	A	H	O	R	C	A	C	U	T	E
E	M	U	F	E	A	R	A	G	R	A
A	B	E	F	A	N	C	Y	T	H	A
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			P	E	C	S	P	I	P	E
S	T	O	P	T	H	A	T	P	O	L
A	W	N	S	A	R	I	S	S	I	N
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S	T	Y	L	E	H	I	N	D		
			I	R	A		A	S	C	O
R	O	G	E	R	T	H	A	T		O
A	V	E	R		M	I	S	O		O
M	A	T	S		S	T	A	R		P

1-11

CRYPTOQUIP

XSP BZMKR XSP'AT BSZC KO
LTAT HLTO TUTAXGSCX TZNT
NMXN VLTX MAT UTAX HMAR?

CSO'V GT BLKZZX!

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Today's Cryptoquip Clue: B equals C

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Be aware of the common red flags.

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Automotive 140

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STARS AND STRIPES®

NBA/HIGH SCHOOL

NBA roundup

Heat snap Raptors' streak

Associated Press

TORONTO — Wayne Ellington made a go-ahead driving layup with less than a second remaining, and the Miami Heat stopped Toronto's 12-game home winning streak with a 90-80 victory over the Raptors on Tuesday night.

It was the only basket of the second half for Ellington, who finished with 15 points.

Goran Dragic had 24 points and 12 rebounds as Miami extended its season-best winning streak to five. Bam Adebayo had 16 points and a career-high 15 rebounds and Hassan Whiteside collected 13 points and 15 boards for the Heat, who had dropped their previous five visits to Toronto.

The Raptors were without point guard Kyle Lowry after the three-time All-Star bruised his tailbone during Monday's overtime win at Brooklyn.

DeMar DeRozan scored 25 points as the Raptors lost for the first time in six games and failed to break the franchise record for

consecutive home victories.

Trail Blazers 117, Thunder 106: CJ McCollum hit 11 points and seven assists, and the Trail Blazers beat the Thunder in the opener of a four-game trip.

Shabazz Napier added 21 points and Jusuf Nurkic had 20 points and eight rebounds for Portland, which moved past Oklahoma City into second in the Northwest Division standings with its seventh win in its last nine games against the Thunder.

Mavericks 114, Magic 99: Dirk Nowitzki and rookie Dennis Smith Jr. each scored 20 points, and host Dallas stopped a three-game slide.

Wesley Matthews had 16 points for the Mavericks, who got their first win since Dec. 31 against Oklahoma City. Harrison Barnes and Yogi Ferrell scored 15 points apiece, and J.J. Barea had 12 assists and eight points.

Lakers 99, Kings 86: Julius Randle had 22 points and 14 rebounds, and Lonzo Ball added 11 rebounds and 11 assists as Los



TONY GUTIERREZ/AP

Mavericks forward Dirk Nowitzki celebrates a basket against the Magic on Tuesday in Dallas.

Angelo defeated Sacramento.

Brook Lopez scored 18 points and Kentavious Caldwell-Pope had 16 for the host Lakers, who have won two straight following a nine-game losing streak.

Power: Curry doesn't lose step with injury

FROM BACK PAGE

Last week's Western Conference player of the week, Curry has scored 29 or more points in seven straight games. He's gone over 30 points in six of those seven games and 12 times overall.

He's been practically unstoppable since returning from injury, averaging 35.2 points in that span as well as 5.6 rebounds, 5.6 assists and 1.4 steals in 32.4 minutes. Curry also has four or more three-pointers in seven straight games.

The Warriors have needed his steady hand with playmaking sidekick and Finals MVP Kevin Durant sitting out the past three games with a strained right calf. Durant was expected back for Wednesday's home game against the Clippers.

Curry also had six turnovers Monday night, so coach Steve Kerr hardly considered it one of his star's best games.

That's fine with Curry.

"Every game he's going to be pretty. I love being held to that high standard. That's what kind of keeps me motivated," he said. "When you can look at it and find and find things that I can do better, which nobody needs to tell me that I already know."

The good news is Curry's footwork hasn't been hampered by the ankle injury. It's something David West and Green respect in particular, even if it's

not the showiest talent for the shoot-from-anywhere point guard.

"I think people get caught up in the flashy stuff, but his footwork is incredible," West said. "I think that's the one thing that kind of gets lost in it. If you're a basketball player you understand that footwork is sort of the foundation. I don't think we've seen the type of footwork he has. He gets his feet set on every single shot, he's never out of range."

Curry works hard on that footwork in the offseason. It's what allows him to have such a quick release, even if he's catching the ball on the move or with his body facing half-court.

"He's fast with the ball but he's not the fastest guy in the world. He's pretty strong but he's not the strongest guy in the world, but his footwork is so good that for what speed he may not have, it makes him way faster because of how good his footwork is," Green said. "He's probably faster than someone that may be faster than him because he kind of dances. He should go on 'Dancing with the Stars.'"

Curry chuckled about that idea. Alas, he loves his day job, and his first choice for a second career would be as part owner for his hometown Carolina Panthers.

"I will not take Draymond's advice and go on 'Dancing with the Stars,'" he said. "I'll just keep shooting jump shots."

NBA roundup

Eastern Conference

Atlantic Division		W	L	Pct	GB
Boston	33	13	20	62%	
Toronto	28	18	25	61%	1 1/2
Philadelphia	19	27	35	55%	10 1/2
New York	19	27	35	55%	10 1/2
Brooklyn	19	27	35	55%	10 1/2

Southeast Division		W	L	Pct	GB
Miami	23	17	25	62%	
Washington	23	17	25	62%	
Charlotte	15	25	35	55%	11 1/2
Orlando	10	30	40	25%	20
Atlanta	10	30	40	25%	20

Central Division		W	L	Pct	GB
Cleveland	26	14	22	59%	
Portland	22	18	26	58%	3 1/2
Minneapolis	21	18	26	58%	4
Indiana	14	27	34	41%	12 1/2
Chicago	14	27	34	41%	12 1/2

Western Conference

Southwest Division		W	L	Pct	GB
Houston	28	14	26	68%	
San Antonio	28	14	26	68%	
New Orleans	20	22	32	56%	8
Dallas	14	28	38	37%	15 1/2
Memphis	12	27	38	31%	18

Northwest Division		W	L	Pct	GB
Minnesota	26	16	26	61%	
Portland	22	18	26	58%	3 1/2
Oklahoma City	22	18	26	58%	3 1/2
Golden State	16	24	40	29%	10

Pacific Division		W	L	Pct	GB
Utah	8	30	42	16%	
Los Angeles	18	21	39	46%	11 1/2
San Antonio	13	27	38	35%	16 1/2
Sacramento	13	27	38	35%	16 1/2
Chicago	13	27	38	35%	16 1/2

Tuesday's games

Miami	90	80	106
Portland	117	106	114
Dallas	114	99	99

Wednesday's games

Lakers	99	86	99
Miami	117	106	114
Portland	117	106	114

Thursday's games

Golden State	117	106	114
Portland	117	106	114
Atlanta	117	106	114

Friday's games

San Antonio	117	106	114
Portland	117	106	114
Atlanta	117	106	114

Saturday's games

Golden State	117	106	114
Portland	117	106	114
Atlanta	117	106	114

Sunday's games

Golden State	117	106	114
Portland	117	106	114
Atlanta	117	106	114

Monday's games

Golden State	117	106	114
Portland	117	106	114
Atlanta	117	106	114

Tuesday's games

Golden State	117	106	114
Portland	117	106	114
Atlanta	117	106	114

Wednesday's games

Golden State	117	106	114
Portland	117	106	114
Atlanta	117	106	114

Thursday's games

Golden State	117	106	114
Portland	117	106	114
Atlanta	117	106	114

Friday's games

Golden State	117	106	114
Portland	117	106	114
Atlanta	117	106	114

Saturday's games

Golden State	117	106	114
Portland	117	106	114
Atlanta	117	106	114

Sunday's games

Golden State	117	106	114
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Atlanta	117	106	114

Monday's games

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Tuesday's games

Golden State	117	106	114
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Wednesday's games

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Thursday's games

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Friday's games

Golden State	117	106	114
Portland	117	106	114
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Monday's games

Golden State	117	106	114
Portland	117	106	114
Atlanta	117	106	114

Tuesday's games

Golden State	117	106	114
Portland	117	106	114
Atlanta	117	106	114

Mavericks 114, Magic 99

ORLANDO	—	Hezonja 5-9 3-15, 2, Simmons 1-7 1-1, Blythe 3-6 0-6, Payton 1-7 0-2, Courtney 5-10 1-2, Iwundu 1-2 2-3 4, Speights 5-8 1-2 13, Gordon 6-16 6-19, Birch 0-0 0-0, Augustin 5-9 1-8, Mack 0-0 0-0, Afflalo 1-2 0-2 1, Totals 36-76 22-99.
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DALLAS	—	Barnes 5-9 3-15, Kleber 1-2 0-2, Nowitzki 6-13 7-7, Smith Jr. 8-19 2-2 20, Matthews 8-10 4-16, McMiller 2-3 1-0 0-0, Powell 3-4 2-7, Meir 3-3 1-1, Ferrell 2-3 1-0 0-0, Augustin 5-9 1-8, 4-8 0-0, Collinsworth 0-0 0-0 0-0, Totals 43-192 114.
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Orlando	19	29	27	24—	99
Dallas	25	18	39	32—	114
Three-point goals—Orlando	11	29			

Three-point goals—Orlando 10, Dallas 4.

Assists—Payton 22, Hezonja 2-4, Speights 2-5, Gordon 1-7, Simmons 0-2, Courtney 0-4, Dallas 2-6 (Barnes 2-3, Ferrell 2-3, Smith Jr. 2-5, Matthews 2-6, Nowitzki 2-6), Totals 25-25.

Rebounds—Orlando 42 (Speights 10), Dallas 38 (Ferrell 12, Barnes 12), Totals 80—Orlando 23, Dallas 22, A—18,366 (15,000).

Trail Blazers 117, Thunder 106

PORTLAND	—	Turner 3-2 2-7, Aminu 4-10 6-10, Nurkic 8-15 4-9, Napier 2-5 0-0 9-10, McCollum 11-19 4-27, Layman 0-0 0-0, Harkless 3-4 2-5, Venetis 1-1 0-0, Collins 4-9 0-9, Davis 1-4 0-2, Connaughton 4-7 4-10 0-0, Totals 43-126 117.
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OKLAHOMA CITY	—	George 8-18 1-22, Anthony 8-17 0-19, Adams 6-8 4-14, Westbrook 7-20 0-15, Alexander 0-2 0-0, Grant 1-2, Patterson 0-1, Barnes 1-2, Abrines 2-5 2-5, Huestis 0-1 0-0, Singler 1-1 0-2, Totals 38-106 106.
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Portland	26	24 34 29-117
Thunder	24	24 36 106

Three-point goals—Portland 10-22, Napier 2-3, Connaughton 2-4, Aminu 2-6, Turner 1-1, Harkless 1-1, Collins 1-5, McCollum 1-5, Oklahoma City 13-31 (George 5-9, Anthony 3-9, Felton 2-4, Grant 1-2, Westbrook 2-5, Barnes 1-3, Ferguson 0-1), Rebounds—Portland 42 (Harkless 10), Oklahoma City 38 (Adams 10, Assists—Portland 19 (McCollum 7), Oklahoma City 20 (Westbrook 12), Total Fouls—Portland 20, Oklahoma City 17, Technicals—George, A—18,203 (18,366).

Heat 90, Raptors 83

MIAMI	—	Richardson 3-13 0-6, Olynyk 2-5 0-4, Whiteside 6-16 1-13, Diggs 10-13 2-2, Johnson 8-15 4-9, Johnson 2-3 0-4, Adebayo 8-14 0-16, Ellington 6-17 0-15, Totals 39-97 90.
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TORONTO	—	Anunoby 1-3 0-2, Baka 1-2 0-2, DeRozan 1-2 0-2, VanVleet 5-9 2-13, Siakam 1-4 0-2, Noguera 1-2 2-4, Powell 1-2 1-2, VanVleet 1-2 0-2, Totals 35-92 83.
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Miami	22	29 21 18-90
Toronto	21	20 21 83-83

Three-point goals—Portland 10-22, Napier 2-3, Connaughton 2-4, Aminu 2-6, Turner 1-1, Harkless 1-1, Collins 1-5, McCollum 1-5, Oklahoma City 13-31 (George 5-9, Anthony 3-9, Felton 2-4, Grant 1-2, Westbrook 2-5, Barnes 1-3, Ferguson 0-1), Rebounds—Portland 42 (Harkless 10), Oklahoma City 38 (Adams 10, Assists—Portland 19 (McCollum 7), Oklahoma City 20 (Westbrook 12), Total Fouls—Portland 20, Oklahoma City 17, Technicals—George, A—18,203 (18,366).

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Portland	26	24 34 29-117
Thunder	24	24 36 106

Three-point goals—Portland 10-22, Napier 2-3, Connaughton 2-4, Aminu 2-6, Turner 1-1, Harkless 1-1, Collins 1-5, McCollum 1-5, Oklahoma City 13-31 (George 5-9, Anthony 3-9, Felton 2-4, Grant 1-2, Westbrook 2-5, Barnes 1-3, Ferguson 0-1),

COLLEGE BASKETBALL



Tom Lynn/AP

Marquette's Andrew Rowsey, left, drives on Seton Hall's Michael Nzei on Tuesday in Milwaukee.

Top 25 roundup

Marquette routs Seton Hall

Associated Press

MILWAUKEE — For all the attention Marquette receives for its three-point shooting, coach Steve Wojciechowski would rather have his team attack the rim.

Andrew Rowsey scored 31 points and set the tone early by driving the lane, and the Golden Eagles used a 16-0 run in the second half to pull away from No. 13 Seton Hall 84-64 on Tuesday night.

Sam Hauser added 14 points for the Golden Eagles (12-5, 3-2 Big East). He hit four of nine from three-point range, including one with 5:25 left for a 73-55 lead.

Energized Marquette outshotted Seton Hall (14-3, 3-1) and held its own in the paint against the Pirates' dominant center, Angel Delgado (12 points, 10 rebounds). The Golden Eagles set a quick tempo to beat the Pirates on both ends of the floor.

"This may be hard for your guys to believe," Wojciechowski said after the game, "but we want to be a driving team. ... A lot of time because people have to respect our shooting, you can find space. But we talk about driving more than we talk about shooting threes."

Seton Hall stumbled after reaching its highest ranking in the AP Top 25 poll since Jan. 2, 2001. Coach Kevin Willard's team may have expended too much energy in rallying from 11 down with less than 10 minutes left to beat Butler on the road Saturday.

"We didn't have the same pop we've been playing with for the last couple games," Willard said. "We didn't have the same quickness and the same pop."

No. 3 Virginia 68, Syracuse 61: Kyle Guy scored 22 points, DeAndre Hunter added 15 and host Virginia beat Syracuse. Guy made five three-pointers

for Virginia (15-1, 4-0 Atlantic Coast Conference). The Cavaliers attempted a season-high 27 threes and made nine. Devon Hall added 13 points, eight assists and seven rebounds for Virginia.

No. 5 Purdue 70, Michigan 69: Isaac Haas made a tiebreaking free throw with four seconds remaining and visiting Purdue remained unbeaten in the Big Ten.

The Boilermakers (16-2, 5-0) have won 12 in a row, while the Wolverines (14-4, 3-2) had their seven-game winning streak snapped. Purdue is 5-0 in conference play for the first time since 1989-90.

No. 9 Oklahoma 75, No. 8 Texas Tech 65: Trae Young scored 22 of his 27 points in the second half to help host Oklahoma top Texas Tech.

Young, a freshman point guard who leads the nation in scoring and assists, shot just 1-for-12 in the first half. He went 6-for-11 in the second to help the Sooners bounce back from a loss to No. 2 West Virginia on Saturday.

No. 12 Kansas 83, Iowa State 78: Malik Newman scored a career-high 27 points, Svi Mykhailiuk added 23 and host Kansas staved off an upset bid by pulling away in the closing minutes.

Devonte Graham added 11 points for the Jayhawks (13-3, 3-1 Big 12), most of those coming in crunch time, when he shook off a 1-for-11 start from the field to knock down three big jumpers.

No. 20 North Carolina 96, Boston College 66: Luke Maye had career highs of 32 points and 18 rebounds, and host North Carolina's small lineup got off to a fast start in an easy win against Boston College.

Cameron Johnson added 14 points and 11 rebounds for the Tar Heels (13-4, 2-2 Atlantic Coast Conference), who avoided their

first three-game losing streak since January 2014. UNC coach Roy Williams juggled his starting lineup to move in Johnson over freshman forward Garrison Brooks — and that wing-heavy unit responded by getting out in transition and on the attack in their active opening minutes.

No. 21 Kentucky 74, Texas A&M 73: PJ Washington made a steal that led to Kevin Knox's go-ahead layup with 2:28 left, then added four points down the stretch to help host Kentucky rally past Texas A&M.

Trailing 59-53 with 8:43 remaining, the Wildcats clawed back to tie the game three times before Washington stole a high pass and fed Knox for a 69-67 lead.

No. 22 Auburn 85, Mississippi 70: Desean Murray had 16 points and eight rebounds to help host Auburn erase a 10-point half-time deficit and beat Mississippi.

Auburn (15-1, 3-0 Southeastern Conference) won its 13th straight game and opened 3-0 in conference play for the first time since 2002-03. The Tigers had lost 10 straight against Ole Miss.

No. 24 Tennessee 92, Vanderbilt 84: Grant Williams scored a career-best 37 points as Tennessee rallied from a 10-point deficit in the second half to beat host Vanderbilt.

The sophomore forward avoided foul trouble, and Vanderbilt couldn't handle the 6-foot-7, 241-pound Williams around the basket. Admiral Schofield tied his career high with 22 points.

No. 25 Creighton 85, Butler 74: Marcus Foster scored 21 of his 23 points in the first half, and Martin Krampelj had 14 points and 14 rebounds for his third straight double-double.

The host Bluejays (14-3, 4-1 Big East) won for the ninth time in 10 games.

Carter helps WV escape Baylor

By JOHN RABY
Associated Press

MORGANTOWN, W.Va. — Handed its highest ranking in 58 years, West Virginia was leathargic against Baylor for nearly the entire game. It took Jevon Carter getting free for the go-ahead three-pointer in the final minute to keep the nation's longest winning streak going.

Carter, a senior, got around a screen set by teammate Sagaba Konate to sink a long jumper from the right wing with 57.5 seconds left and No. 2 West Virginia escaped with a 57-54 victory Tuesday night.

"Just like I drew it up," joked West Virginia coach Bob Huggins. "Our young guys have a tendency to get out of sorts. (Carter) took it upon himself to make a play."

Baylor expected Carter to have the ball at the end of a tight game.

"We said in the huddle, 'It's Carter time,'" so big players make big plays and that's why they're good players," said Baylor coach Scott Drew. "I'll be really happy to see him walk across that stage and graduate, by the way."

West Virginia (15-1, 4-0 Big 12) struggled to make shots the entire game but extended the nation's longest winning streak to 15, its best since winning 22 straight in 1988-89.

The Mountaineers, who had little inside success on offense against the taller Bears (11-5, 1-3), shot 31.1 percent (9-for-29) from the floor and were held to their lowest point total of the season.

A year ago Wednesday, Baylor came to Morgantown unbeaten and with its first No. 1 AP ranking in program history. The Bears were blown out 89-68.

The setup was the opposite this time. West Virginia has its highest ranking in the AP poll since being ranked No. 2 during Jerry West's senior year in December 1959.

The Mountaineers came out flat against Baylor, falling behind by nine points early before

fighting back to tie it at halftime. West Virginia never trailed in the second half but let the Bears stay close in a game with few scoring runs. Baylor made one field goal over the final eight minutes.

Daxter Miles Jr. threw the ball away but raced to the other end of the court to save it from going out of bounds on Baylor's fast break, leading to Carter's tiebreaking three for a 54-51 lead.

"I'm the point guard so I always want the ball in my hands," Carter said. "I just came off the ball screen and had a little bit of space and I knocked it in. We came up big and we did what we were supposed to do."

Miles then forced Manu Lecomte into missing an off-balanced jumper as the shot clock expired. Miles made a free throw with 15.8 seconds left and, after Baylor's Jake Lindsey hit a three-pointer with four seconds to go, Carter was fouled and made both free throws for the final margin.

Lecomte's three-point try at the buzzer was long and right.

Miles and Lamont West led West Virginia with 12 points apiece.

Lecomte led Baylor with 13 points and Jo Luai-Acui Jr. had 11 points and 10 rebounds for his eighth double-double of the season.

Big picture: Baylor: The Bears had 21 turnovers overall and shot 27.6 percent from the floor (8-for-29) in the second half in falling to 0-5 against ranked opponents. After starting 10-2, Baylor has lost three of four, with the other recent setbacks coming against No. 8 Texas Tech and No. 16 TCU.

West Virginia: Huggins has said it doesn't matter who scores for his team as long as someone does. It marked the second time in the past three games that Carter, West Virginia's leading scorer, was held to single digits. He finished with eight points, nine below his team-leading average. Top bench scorer Teddy Allen played just five minutes due to foul trouble and went scoreless.



RAYMOND THOMPSON/AP

West Virginia guard Jevon Carter, right, drives to the basket while being defended by Baylor guard Jake Lindsey during the second half on Tuesday in Morgantown, W.Va.

NHL



ALEX BRANDON/AP

Capitals defenseman Brooks Orpik, left, battles for the puck with Vancouver Canucks left wing Thomas Vanek during the third period of Tuesday's game in Washington. The Capitals won 3-1.

Roundup

Capitals down Canucks for fifth straight victory

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — John Carlson, Lars Eller and Evgeny Kuznetsov scored to help the Washington Capitals beat the Vancouver Canucks 3-1 on Tuesday night for their fifth consecutive victory.

Backup goaltender Philipp Grubauer stopped 37 of 38 shots for his third win of the season. It was Washington's NHL-best 10th straight home win.

Daniel Sedin scored and Jacob Markstrom made 33 saves for the Canucks, who have lost five in a row. Vancouver has gone 2-11-2 in its past 15 games to go from third in the Pacific Division to 14th in the 15-team Western Conference.

Kuznetsov made it 3-1 in the second when he battered the puck out of the air on his own rebound with help from Canucks defenseman Erik Gudranson, who accidentally gloved it into his own net. Markstrom did his best to keep his team in the game while the Caps outshot Vancouver 18-4 in the second period, and Grubauer was up to the task in the third with 20 saves.

Blackhawks 8, Senators 2: Patrick Kane had a goal and four assists for a career-high five points, powering Chicago to the win.

Nick Schmaltz and Jonathan Toews each scored two goals for the Blackhawks, and Anton Forsberg made 25 saves. Toews has five goals and four assists during a five-game point streak.

Lightning 5, Hurricanes 4: Tyler Johnson had three goals for host Tampa Bay, and Jake Dotchin scored a tiebreaking goal midway through the third period.

NHL-leading Tampa Bay also got a goal from Victor Hedman, and Brayden Point had three assists. Andrei Vasilevsky made 28 saves.

Panthers 7, Blues 4: Vincent Trocheck had two goals and an assist, helping visiting Florida snap a three-game losing streak.

The Panthers rallied from 2-0 and 3-2 deficits. Jonathan Huberdeau and Aleksandr Barkov each had a goal and two assists, and James Reimer stopped 26 shots in his 15th straight start.

Jets 7, Sabres 4: Kyle Connor had two goals and



JEFFREY T. BARNES/AP

Sabres goalie Chad Johnson, right, stops Winnipeg Jets forward Marko Dano during the second period of Tuesday's game in Buffalo, N.Y.

an assist and Nikolaj Ehlers also scored twice, leading visiting Winnipeg to its third straight victory.

Patrick Laine and Dustin Byfuglien also scored for the Jets in the opener of a three-game trip. Joel Armia added an empty-netter.

Predators 2, Oilers 1: Viktor Arvidsson had a goal and an assist, helping host Nashville to its 11th consecutive win against Edmonton.

Craig Smith also scored for the Predators, and Pekka Rinne made 25 saves.

Flames 3, Wild 2 (OT): Dougie Hamilton scored 2:39 into overtime to lift visiting Calgary to its season-high fourth straight win.

Michael Ferland and Sean Monahan each had a goal and an assist and Johnny Gaudreau added three assists in the opener of a four-game trip for the Flames. Mike Smith made 33 saves.

Scoreboard

Eastern Conference

Atlantic Division	GP	W	L	OT	Pts	GF	GA
Tampa Bay	43	31	9	3	65	160	107
Boston	40	23	10	7	53	131	102
Toronto	44	25	16	3	53	143	127
Florida	42	18	18	6	42	120	137
Detroit	41	17	20	4	41	112	127
Montreal	42	16	20	4	40	108	129
Ottawa	41	14	18	9	37	113	146
Buffalo	43	10	24	9	29	96	150

Metropolitan Division

Washington	47	25	17	5	57	135	121
Columbus	44	25	16	3	53	121	121
New Jersey	42	22	11	8	52	130	125
N.Y. Rangers	42	22	15	5	49	128	117
Pittsburgh	44	22	19	3	47	126	138
Philadelphia	42	19	15	8	46	113	122
Carolina	42	19	15	8	46	119	131
N.Y. Islanders	43	21	18	4	46	146	158

Western Conference

Central Division	GP	W	L	OT	Pts	GF	GA
Winnipeg	44	26	11	7	59	151	121
Nashville	42	25	11	6	56	131	114
St. Louis	46	26	17	3	53	124	122
Dallas	43	24	16	3	51	132	118
Chicago	42	21	15	6	48	133	116
Minnesota	43	22	17	4	48	125	126
Colorado	41	22	16	3	47	135	124

Pacific Division

Vegas	41	29	10	2	60	143	113
Los Angeles	42	24	14	4	51	126	99
San Jose	40	21	13	6	48	110	106
Calgary	42	16	24	4	48	118	141
Anaheim	43	19	15	9	47	117	120
Edmonton	44	18	23	3	39	119	143
Arizona	43	10	27	6	26	98	150

Note: Two points for a win, one point for overtime loss, two points for conference advance to playoffs.

Monday's games

Tuesday's games	GP	W	L	OT	Pts	GF	GA
Winnipeg 7, Buffalo 4							
Washington 3, Vancouver 1							
Chicago 8, Ottawa 2							
Tampa Bay 5, Carolina 4							
Nashville 2, Edmonton 1							
Calgary 3, Minnesota 2, OT							
Florida 7, St. Louis 4							

Wednesday's games

Thursday's games	GP	W	L	OT	Pts	GF	GA
Ottawa at Toronto							
Minnesota at Chicago							
Carolina at Washington							
Columbus at Buffalo							
Calgary at Tampa Bay							

Friday's games

Saturday's games	GP	W	L	OT	Pts	GF	GA
Vancouver at Columbus							
Calgary at Florida							
Washington at Carolina							
Winnipeg at Chicago							
Edmonton at Arizona							

Tuesday

Jets 7, Sabres 4

Winnipeg	Buffalo	First Period	Second Period	Third Period	OT	Total
7	4	3-1	2-2	2-1	0-0	7-4

First Period—1. Winnipeg, Laine 9 (Connor, Wheeler), 1:43 (pp), 2. Buffalo, Eliech 16 (O'Reilly, Kopko), 14:51 (3. Winnipeg, Byfuglien 2 (Perrault, Enstrom), 15:40.

Second Period—4. Winnipeg, Ehlers 9 (Perrault, Morisy), 1:26 (5. Winnipeg, Connor 14 (Trouba, Wheeler), 12:49. 6. Winnipeg, Ehlers 9 (Little, Myers), 15:42 (pp). 7. Buffalo, O'Reilly 11 (Okopko, Eliech), 18:42 (pp).

Third Period—3. Winnipeg, Connor 15 (Trouba), 7:08. 9. Buffalo, Pominville 9 (O'Reilly, Schmalz), 8:26 (pp). 10. Buffalo, Eliech 17 (Ristolainen, Okopko), 14:53. 11. Winnipeg, Armia 11 (Copp), 18:55.

Shots on Goal—Winnipeg 13-11-11-37. Buffalo 9-11-14-34.

Power-play opportunities—Winnipeg 2 of 4; Buffalo 1 of 3.

Goals—Winnipeg: Connor 3 (4 shots-30 saves); Buffalo: Johnson 1-8-3 (19-16), Lehner 9-16-6 (17-14).

OT—1-388 (13:07), T—2:26.

Predators 2, Oilers 1

Edmonton	Nashville	First Period	Second Period	Third Period	OT	Total
1	2	0-1	0-2	2-0	0-0	2-2

First Period—1. Nashville, Smith 15 (Davidson, Arvidsson), 8:26 (pp). 2. Nashville, Arvidsson 13 (Josi, Johansen), 15:02.

Second Period—3. Edmonton, McDavid 15 (Draisaitl, Benning), 0:45.

Shots on Goal—Edmonton 8-11-7-26. Nashville 11-7-6-24.

Goals—Edmonton: Talbot 15-16-2 (24 shots-22 saves); Nashville: Smith 15-13-3 (26-25).

OT—1-188 (17:13), T—2:23.

Capitals 3, Canucks 1

Washington	Vancouver	First Period	Second Period	Third Period	OT	Total
3	1	0-0	1-1	2-0	0-0	3-1

First Period—1. Vancouver, D.Sedin 10 (Vancouver, 8:23 (pp). 2. Washington, Carlson 5 (Ovechkin, Backstrom), 15:13.

Second Period—4. Washington, Kuznetsov 13 (Niskanen, Orlov), 4:57.

Shots on Goal—Washington 14-20-38. Washington 11-18-37.

Power-play opportunities—Vancouver 1 of 3; Washington 0 of 2.

Goals—Vancouver, Markstrom 10-14-13 (36 shots-33 saves); Washington, Grubauer 3-5-3 (38-37).

OT—18-506 (18:27), T—2:36.



MARK ZALESKI/AP

Predators defenseman PK Subban controls the puck Tuesday in Nashville, Tenn.

Lightning 5, Hurricanes 4

Tampa Bay	Carolina	First Period	Second Period	Third Period	OT	Total
5	4	2-1	1-4	2-0	0-0	5-4

First Period—1. Carolina, McGinn 7 (William, Slavin), 7:22 (pp). 2. Tampa Bay, Hedman 6 (Stamkos, Kucherov), 10:02. 3. Carolina, Aho 14, 12:10. 4. Tampa Bay, Johnson 14 (Point, Stralman), 16:26.

Second Period—5. Tampa Bay, Johnson 15 (Point, Dotchin), 1:58. 6. Carolina, Faulk 4 (Teravainen, Staal), 10:36 (pp).

Third Period—7. Tampa Bay, Dotchin 3 (Point, Palat), 9:27. 8. Tampa Bay, Johnson 16 (Stralman), 14:54. 9. Carolina, Lindm 12 (Teravainen, Faulk), 18:42.

Shots on Goal—Carolina 8-15-9-32. Tampa Bay 14-11-3-34.

Power-play opportunities—Carolina 2 of 4; Tampa Bay 9 of 0.

Goals—Carolina, Ward 11-4-2 (34 shots-29 saves); Tampa Bay, Vasilevsky 27-2-2 (32-28).

OT—19-092 (19:02), T—2:45.

Blackhawks 8, Senators 2

Chicago	Ottawa	First Period	Second Period	Third Period	OT	Total
8	2	5-2	2-0	1-0	0-0	8-2

First Period—1. Chicago, Panik 6 (Kempny, Murphy), 18:51.

Second Period—2. Chicago, Sharp 6 (Kane, Kempny), 5:14. 3. Chicago, Schmaltz 11 (Kane, Oesterle), 8:15. 4. Chicago, Toews 13 (Smith, Oesterle), 9:53. 5. Ottawa, Stone 18, 10:25. 6. Ottawa, Brassard 12 (Stone, Cecil), 16:27.

Third Period—9. Chicago, Schmaltz 12 (Sharp, Kane), 17:33 (pp). 8. Chicago, Rutta 4 (Forsberg, Kane), 18:07 (pp).

Shots on Goal—Chicago 17-14-12-43. Ottawa 8-11-8-27.

Power-play opportunities—Chicago 4 of 6; Ottawa 5 of 4.

Goals—Chicago, Forsberg 3-5-3 (27 shots-25 saves), Ottawa, Anderson 11-3 (26-22), Condon 3-5-4 (17-13).

OT—14-007 (18:27), T—2:36.

Panthers 7, Blues 4

Florida	St. Louis	First Period	Second Period	Third Period	OT	Total
7	4	3-2	1-1	2-1	0-0	7-4

First Period—1. St. Louis, Staley 10 (Barbieri, Edmondson), 0:48. 2. St. Louis, Isaksson 5 (Scherer, Tarasenko), 8:06.

Second Period—3. Florida, Edlund 7 (Malgin, Vandyke), 8:14. 4. Florida, Barkov 14 (Dadonov, Huberdeau), 17:56.

Third Period—9. Florida, Sevcenko 6 (Ovechkin), 13:06. 10. St. Louis, Thompson 3 (Pietrangeli, Sobotta), 17:19. 11. Florida, Trocheck 17 (Barkov, Huberdeau), 17:56.

Shots on Goal—Florida 15-12-9-36. St. Louis 10-12-9-31.

Power-play opportunities—Florida 0 of 2; St. Louis 0 of 2.

Goals—Florida, Reimer 12-11-15 (30 shots-26 saves), St. Louis, Allen 18-14-12 (28-18), Hutton 18-11-11 (30-37).

OT—18-783 (19:50), T—2:37.

Flames 3, Wild 2 (OT)

Calgary	Minnesota	First Period	Second Period	Third Period	OT	Total
3	2	1-0	1-1	1-0	0-1	3-2

First Period—1. Calgary, 0-0-0-0 (Gaudreau, Monahan), 6:00.

Second Period—2. Calgary, Monahan 10 (Ferland, Gaudreau), 19:09.

Third Period—3. Calgary, Grandlund 12 (Kane, Kutter), 7:15. 4. Minnesota, Sargunov 5 (Suter, Grandlund), 12:13.

Overtime—5. Calgary, Hamilton 6 (Gaudreau, Giordano), 2:39.

Shots on Goal—Calgary 14-20-29. Minnesota 8-10-15-25.

Power-play opportunities—Calgary 0 of 4; Minnesota 0 of 2.

Goals—Calgary, Smith 18-13-3 (35 shots-12 saves), Minnesota, Stalock 7-8-3 (29-26).

OT—15-011 (18:06), T—2:42.

SPORTS BRIEFS/COLLEGE FOOTBALL

Briefly

Shiffrin extends streak to 5 races

Associated Press

FLACHAU, Austria — Olympic slalom champion Mikaela Shiffrin used a frenetic final run to stretch her winning streak in 2018 to five races at a women's World Cup night race on Tuesday.

Shiffrin became the first female skier to start a calendar year with five straight wins, eclipsing the previous best mark by Swiss standout Vreni Schneider in 1989.

For the first time this season, Shiffrin was not leading after the opening part of a slalom. After a run in which the American struggled for rhythm throughout, she trailed first-run leader Bernadette Schild of Austria by 0.37 seconds.

But on a course set by her coach Mike Day, the defending overall champion was back to her best and posted the fastest second-run time to beat the Austrian by 0.94.

Frida Hansdotter of Sweden was 1.43 behind in third.

"My timing, my feeling, my rhythm was so much better than in the first run," Shiffrin told The Associated Press. "Actually, the biggest change was just my mindset. It was a nerves' thing. If I am a little nervous or anxious, my timing is off, then it can make everything look really terrible."

D-backs' Delgado gets \$2.25 million deal

PHOENIX — The Arizona Diamondbacks avoided arbitration with Randall Delgado by agreeing to a \$2.25 million, one-year contract with the right-handed reliever.

Often as an effective long-reliever, Delgado went 1-2 with a 3.59 ERA in 26 appearances in 2017 before right elbow inflammation in mid-July ended his season.

The deal announced Monday night indicates the Diamondbacks are optimistic about Delgado's recovery. Delgado was acquired

in the Justin Upton trade in 2013 and is 23-19 in 236 games with the Diamondbacks.

In other baseball news:

■ Texas Rangers outfielder Ryan Rua has agreed to an \$870,000, one-year contract to avoid salary arbitration.

■ Left-hander Andrew Heaney has agreed to an \$800,000, one-year deal to return to the Los Angeles Angels.

■ Free-agent catcher Rene Rivera and the Los Angeles Angels have agreed to a \$2.8 million, one-year contract.

Texas guard Jones gets leukemia diagnosis

AUSTIN, Texas — Texas announced sophomore guard Andrew Jones has leukemia and has started treatment.

Jones was the Longhorns leading scorer before he was sidelined by a broken wrist. He played sparingly in his return after complaining of low energy and was sent for tests.

Jones considered leaving Texas for the NBA Draft after his freshman season but opted to return to school.

Clemson WR Cain declaring for NFL Draft

CLEMSON, S.C. — Clemson receiver Deon Cain is joining the growing list of Tigers' underclassmen declaring for the NFL Draft.

The school announced Cain's decision Wednesday. He joins receiver Ray-Ray McCleod, safety Van Smith and tight end lineman Taylor Hearn as Tigers giving up their remaining eligibility to turn pro.

Cain is a 6-foot-1, 190-pound junior from Tampa, Fla. He was Clemson's second-leading receiver with 58 catches for 734 yards and six touchdowns. The speedy Cain is projected as a mid-round selection in the draft.



DAVID J. PHILLIP/AP

Alabama's Tua Tagovailoa, right, scrambles away from Georgia's Trenton Thompson during the second half of Monday's national championship game in Atlanta. Tagovailoa topped the second half and guided Alabama to a 26-23 victory in overtime. Will Tagovailoa take over the starting job next season?

What to watch in '18

Here are some story lines worth following

BY RALPH D. RUSSO

Associated Press

Congratulations to 2017 national champion Alabama. While the Crimson Tide celebrate, it's on to 2018 for the rest of college football. Here are some of the numerous story lines to follow next season:

Quarterback competitions

This is as much a story of the offseason as the season, but no doubt the ramifications will be felt all the way through 2018.

Three playoff teams, including the two that played for the national title, will have returning starting quarterbacks. None of those players are locks to start next season.

Jalen Hurts has led Alabama to two straight championship games in his first two college seasons, but it was Tua Tagovailoa who came off the bench Monday night to beat Georgia for the national championship.

Jake Fromm led Georgia to the national title game as a freshman, but five-star recruit Justin Fields will be practicing with the Bulldogs this spring. And where does that leave Jacob Eason, the former five-star who was relegated to backup-up behind Fromm? Some reports have him transferring to Washington.

At Clemson, Kelly Bryant will have to fend off both sophomore Hunter Johnson and five-star incoming freshman Trevor Lawrence. Miami's Malik Rosier is also likely to face a challenge from NKosi Perry, who will be a redshirt freshman, and Notre Dame's Brandon Wimshut will have to reclaim his job after Ian Book led the Fighting Irish to a bowl victory.

Elsewhere, Ohio State will likely turn the team over to Dwayne Haskins. Can incoming freshman Tate Martell be a factor? Texas A&M transfer Kyler Murray is the heir apparent to Baker Mayfield at Oklahoma.

Heat on Harbaugh

The offseason's most interesting coach needs to start having a bigger impact during the season. Part of Michigan's problem in 2017 was the expectations were a bit out of whack, but that doesn't let Harbaugh off the hook. The Wolverines' offense was bad and if you're a great coach who supposedly has a skill for developing quarterbacks — and Harbaugh is being paid as such — you need to do better than 109th in the country in yards per pass attempt.

No excuses next season. Harbaugh will have three of his own recruiting classes. The defense should be loaded again. The Wolverines could have Shea Patterson at quarterback if the Ole Miss transfer gets eligible, but even if they don't either Brandon Peters or Dylan McCaffrey should provide at least competency.

Harbaugh needs to start winning big plays: rivalry games, division titles, conference championships, playoff spots.

Who for Heisman?

Baker Mayfield is gone. So is Lamar Jackson, Saquon Barkley

and Rashaad Penny. That's four of the top five Heisman Trophy vote-getters.

Also, flashy quarterbacks such as Sam Darnold and Josh Rosen, who were trendy picks going in this past season, are on their way to the NFL.

So who is the favorite going into 2018? Runner-up Bryce Love of Stanford would be a good pick, though the junior could go pro. Wisconsin's Jonathan Taylor, who ran for nearly 2,000 yards as a freshman, could easily surpass that in 2018. Still, it's become a quarterbacks' award, with 15 of the last 18 going to QBs.

The top quarterbacks' Keep an eye out for some of those newcomers and possible first-year starters. Of the established players, Penn State's Trace McSorley steps out of Barkley's shadow and Oregon's Justin Herbert could be the guy with the NFL Draft buzz.

Jimbo in Aggeland

It has been 40 years since a coach with a national championship on his résumé left one college job for another. Texas A&M paid \$75 million dollars for Jimbo Fisher and his championship ring. The Aggies have been stuck in neutral for the past few years under Kevin Sumlin.

A&M is not bereft of talent, but it would be normal for year one to hit some bumps as the program transitions. Thing is \$75 million doesn't buy patience. A good measuring stick? Georgia was 8-5 in its first season and then took off in year two. That's not to suggest A&M will be in the playoff in 2019, but an underwhelming 2018 is no reason to panic. Still, \$75 million.

Other new coaches who will be getting a lot of attention: Chip Kelly at UCLA; Scott Frost at Nebraska; Jeremy Pruitt at Tennessee.

Hot seats

Michigan is not firing Jim Harbaugh so let's just end that right here. But which coach does enter next season very much in need of a change in trajectory?

Not a lot of really obvious choices, though this is probably Kliff Kingsbury's last chance to get past mediocre at Texas Tech and Vanderbilt needs to show some improvement under Derek Mason after four seasons that have produced an 18-31 record. The most fascinating coaching situation will be at Kansas State, where 78-year-old Hall of Famer Bill Snyder is back with no exit plan in sight.

Can the Pac-12 rebound?

The West Coast's conference was a dud in 2017, missing out on the playoff for the second time and then crashing in the postseason with a 1-8 bowl record. Bowl records can be deceiving, but it is compounded by the fact that the conference is having a hard time keeping pace with the other Power Five conferences in revenue and exposure.

Washington should still be a national contender and Stanford can be relied upon for consistent top-20 performance. But coaching changes at UCLA, Oregon and the Arizona schools, in addition to USC trying to replace Darrell, means the Pac-12 could again have a hard time putting a team in the playoff.



MARCO THOMAT/AP

The United States' Mikaela Shiffrin poses on the podium after winning Tuesday's women's World Cup slalom in Flachau, Austria. It was the fifth straight World Cup race Shiffrin has won.

NFL

Falcons' Manuel gets good results

By GEORGE HENRY
Associated Press

FLOWERY BRANCH, Ga. — Marquand Manuel has taught Atlanta's defense how to do a better job of closing out games in his first season as an NFL coordinator.

It took a few weeks for Manuel, a longtime defensive back and assistant coach, to get comfortable calling plays for the Falcons, but the defense has improved noticeably from a year ago.

He got the job in February, promoted from secondary coach after the Falcons blew the biggest lead in Super Bowl history — 25 points — to suffer a humiliating loss to New England.

In replacing Richard Smith, Manuel has essentially the same personnel from a season ago, but he's helped Atlanta — thanks in large part to greatly reducing potential plays.

The Falcons ranked No. 8 in passes allowed of at least 20 yards, up 15 spots from last season. They went from 25th in runs allowed of at least 20 yards to No. 2 this season.

Manuel's challenge this week is to draw up a game plan that will help Atlanta (11-6) come away with an NFC divisional playoff victory at Philadelphia (13-3).

It won't be easy, but he credits the years he spent coaching under Pete Carroll in Seattle and under Dan Quinn in Seattle and Atlanta with building the confidence he needs to succeed in pressure situations.

"Understanding the situations,

how to call it, how are you going to respond?" Manuel said Tuesday. "Are you going to be emotional or are you going to keep everyone poised? Again it goes back to getting the players prepared and also having that experience I have to get the coaches prepared."

"So that has been a blessing within itself and it's been awesome just to watch the guys go out. We understood that to be road warriors you have to do the small details right, day in and day out."

Manuel is still annoyed with how poorly the Falcons played in a Week 10 loss at Philadelphia last season, giving up 429 yards and allowing the Eagles to hold the ball for 38 minutes in a nine-point loss.

He also vividly remembers how ragged the Falcons looked this season against Jay Ajayi, the only running back to rush for 100 yards against Atlanta until the Rams' Todd Gurley did the same in last week's playoff win at Los Angeles.

Manuel sees this week's NFC divisional matchup at Philadelphia as a chance to right two wrongs.

The Falcons aren't just looking for payback against the Eagles. They're also eager to get another shot at Ajayi, who led Miami to a 20-17 win in Week 5 at Mercedes-Benz Stadium, but was traded in late October after Philadelphia lost Darren Sproles to a season-ending injury.

Philadelphia has a tough 1-2 punch at running back with Ajayi's speed and LeGarrette Blount's inside power game.

"We don't have a (complicated) defense, but we are very detailed," Manuel said. "And the detail of expectations of understanding that they have to make our defense come to life, and they're doing an awesome job at it."



NFC divisional playoff
Atlanta Falcons (11-6)
at Philadelphia Eagles (13-3)
AFN-Sports
10:30 p.m. Saturday CET
6:30 a.m. Sunday JKT



AFC divisional playoff
Tennessee Titans (10-7)
at New England Patriots (13-3)
AFN-Sports
2 a.m. Sunday CET
10 a.m. Sunday JKT



AFC divisional playoff
Jacksonville Jaguars (11-6)
at Pittsburgh Steelers (13-3)
AFN-Sports
7 p.m. Sunday CET
3 a.m. Monday JKT



NFC divisional playoff
New Orleans Saints (12-5)
at Minnesota Vikings (13-3)
AFN-Sports
10:30 p.m. Sunday CET
6:30 a.m. Monday JKT



PHILAN M. EBENHACK/AP

Jaguars quarterback Blake Bortles, center, rushes for yardage past Buffalo Bills outside linebacker Lorenzo Alexander, left, and free safety Jordan Poyer during the first half of Sunday's wild-card playoff game in Jacksonville, Fla. Bortles finished the game with a team-high 88 yards rushing.

Jaguars flounder as top rushing attack sputters

By MARK LONG
Associated Press

JACKSONVILLE, Fla. — The Jacksonville Jaguars will go down in history as the NFL's top rushing team in 2017.

They haven't looked like it lately.

The Jaguars failed to run the ball with much consistency during the second half of the season, including a wild-card victory over Buffalo. Jacksonville found few holes against the Bills until quarterback Blake Bortles started scrambling in the second half. Still, the lack of a reliable ground attack is a major concern for the third-seeded Jaguars (11-6) heading into Sunday's playoff game at No. 2 seed Pittsburgh (13-3).

"It starts with us up front," rookie left tackle Cam Robinson said.

Coach Doug Marrone agreed, saying "if they're not doing their job up front, it's going to be very difficult."

"We have to figure it out and get it done in a quick fashion," Marrone added.

Little, if anything, changed down the stretch while Jacksonville continued to struggle. The Jaguars averaged 3.58 yards a carry over the final seven weeks of the regular season, ranking 30th in the NFL. They ran for 155 yards in a 10-3 victory against the Bills, but more than half of those came from Bortles.



STEPHEN B. MORTON/AP

Jaguars running back Leonard Fournette, right, has topped the century mark in rushing only twice since mid-October.

His 88 yards rushing were the most by a Jaguars player in nearly a month.

Rookie Leonard Fournette hasn't looked the same since spraining his right ankle against the Los Angeles Rams in mid-October. He ran for 181 and 130 yards in consecutive weeks against the Steelers and the Rams, respectively, and broke off long touch-down runs in both games.

He's topped the century mark twice — both barely — since Bortles has picked up the slack

at times, but he's not the guy the Jaguars rely on week in and week out to carry the offense.

They are built to run the ball and play stout defense. "It's who we are," Bortles said. "We want to be able to run the football and do it different ways, so we have to figure it out, whether it's a during-the-week practice thing or execution thing on Sundays. ... It's a big part of our offense and who we are and who we want to be, so it's important that we figure it out."

NFL

Gruden welcomed back to coach Raiders

By JOSH DUBOW
Associated Press

ALAMEDA, Calif. — Jon Gruden finally decided the time was right to finish what he nearly achieved in his first stint in Oakland and deliver another Super Bowl title to the Raiders.

Nearly 16 years after he was traded to Tampa Bay following a crushing loss in the "Tuck Rule" game in New England and after a six-year courtship by Raiders owner Mark Davis, Gruden is officially back in Oakland where he started his head coaching career 20 years ago.

Gruden was introduced Tuesday in front of a large crowd that included nearly 50 former Raiders and nine Pro Football Hall of Famers as the coach Davis believes can carry Derek Carr and the Raiders back to the top.

The Raiders nearly got there in Gruden's first stint from 1998-2001 but the team lost to Baltimore in the 2000 AFC title game and followed that with the memorable loss in the snow against the Patriots that still haunts the franchise.

Gruden was then traded to Tampa Bay the following month for four draft picks and \$8 million. He beat Oakland in the Super Bowl the next season but always identified with the Raiders.

"For my career to end that night in New England, it still ticks me off," Gruden said. "I'm so thrilled to be back here. I hope people understand the emotion inside. I feel there's unfinished business. I also feel a lot of loyalty and I feel a lot of responsibility to get the Raiders going again. It's been a while since we consistently performed at a high level. That's all I care about."

"I'm going to do everything I can to help this team get right again."

Davis said he had been trying to bring Gruden back for six



MARCIO JOSE SANCHEZ/AP

Raiders new head coach Jon Gruden answers questions during a news conference on Tuesday in Alameda, Calif. He returns to Oakland 16 years after he was traded to Tampa Bay.

'I'm so thrilled to be back here. I hope people understand the emotion inside. I feel there's unfinished business. I also feel a lot of loyalty and I feel a lot of responsibility to get the Raiders going again.'

Jon Gruden
Raiders coach

years ever since taking over the franchise after his father's death. He said he thought he had been close four times before and the opportunity was finally right this year after more than a dozen cross-country recruiting trips to Tampa, Fla.

Davis said he first got an inkling

Gruden might be ready to return when he met with him during the season when the Raiders spent a week in Florida to talk about how to fix a team that was struggling after winning 12 games a year ago under Jack Del Rio.

Talks became even more serious when they met on Christmas

Ever before the Raiders played in Philadelphia in a game Gruden worked for ESPN. That led Davis to decide to cut ties with Del Rio and finalize a deal with Gruden.

Gruden will get a 10-year contract worth about \$100 million, a person familiar with the deal said on the condition of anonymity because terms had not been released.

"Everybody knows I've been infatuated with him or whatever to get him here, but they really didn't know how deep our conversations were going, how far along we were in that to make it happen," Davis said. "Somebody asked me, what was harder — to get the 31 votes to move to Las Vegas? Or to get Jon Gruden? And by far to get Jon Gruden was the toughest."

Gruden returns to the sideline

after nine seasons as an announcer at ESPN. He said he's eager to take over a team with a promising young quarterback in Carr.

Gruden said he hopes the familiarity with new offensive coordinator Greg Olsen, who had that role in Carr's rookie season in 2014, will help Carr bounce back after regressing this season from the form that made him an MVP candidate in 2016.

The Raiders had major drops in scoring (26 to 18.8), yards per game (373.3 to 324.1) and committed twice as many turnovers (14 to 28) this season as Carr took a major step back in his development after signing a \$125 million, five-year extension in the offseason.

"I think he's got huge upside," Gruden said. "With Greg Olsen and the system we will put in place that will demand a lot from him, I think that's going to unlock the greatness in him. I'm very, very excited to have him as our quarterback."

Cincinnati also has hired former Cincinnati assistants coordinator Paul Guenther and former Dallas special teams coordinator Rich Bisaccia for those roles on his new staff.

Gruden brings intensity to the sideline and the meeting rooms that made him a fan favorite in his first stint, earning him the nickname "Chucky" after the character in the 1980s slasher movie "Child's Play."

Some of Gruden's former players said the new Raiders are in for something they've never experienced before.

"Either you buy in or you're not going to be a part of it," said Hall of Famer Jerry Rice, who played one year for Gruden. "I hope these players are ready because they're going to get Chucky. They're going to get him. Now how they deal with that is a different story, but Chucky's going to come out."

Panthers fire offensive coordinator Shula

By STEVE REED
Associated Press

CHARLOTTE, N.C. — Panthers coach Ron Rivera fired longtime offensive coordinator Mike Shula on Tuesday, saying the team's offense needs a "different perspective."

Along with Shula, the Panthers also cut ties with quarterbacks coach Ken Dorsey two days after a playoff loss to the New Orleans Saints.

"I believe we need some different ideas going forward," Rivera said at a news conference.

Shula spent seven seasons with Carolina, working as the quarterbacks coach before being promoted to offensive coordinator in 2013.

Carolina was 11-5 this season and finished 19th in total offense, but again struggled moving the ball through the air and was 28th in passing. The Panthers were 12th in scoring.

Rivera said the Panthers already have "a few" candidates in mind, and strongly

hinted it will be someone with NFL experience, not a college coach, from outside the organization.

Among some of the potential candidates that make sense are Norv Turner, whose son Ron was hired as an offensive consultant by the Panthers last June, and Rob Chudzinski, who worked as the team's offensive coordinator in 2011 and 2012 before taking over as the head coach of the Cleveland Browns.

Rivera was a defensive coach under Turner with the Chargers from 2007-10.

"It signals an opportunity that we are looking to get better and continue to grow," Rivera said.

"That is what the move was made for. Something different, something additional can give us the boost that I'm looking for that can help us get to the ultimate goal, and that is winning the Super Bowl."

The news came one day after Rivera seemed to give his entire coaching staff an endorsement.

However, the two-time AP Coach of the Year said he woke up at 3 in the morning

and began looking at his notes.

He started to have second thoughts and decided to meet with interim general manager Marty Hurney about the decision.

Then he made the change.

Rivera was vague on exactly what bothered him about the offense this past season and prompted the change in thinking, but when asked about the team's lack of identity he said, "you want to be able to understand this is who we are and this is what we do."

Rivera said he still expects the Panthers will use the read option with quarterback Cam Newton, who was the team's leading rusher last season with 754 yards. He also wants to see the ball in Christian McCaffrey's hands in open space.

Carolina has been one of the league's top running teams — in large part because of Newton's ability to run — over the past four seasons, averaging the league's fourth-highest total at 128.3 yards per game.

However, its passing game has sputtered. Over that same span the Panthers averaged 229.5 passing yards per game, which

is the third fewest in the league.

It didn't help that the Panthers suffered several injuries at wide receiver and tight end this season and traded away No. 1 receiver Kelvin Benjamin.

Newton's passing numbers have taken a nosedive since he was selected as the league's MVP in 2015 when he combined for 45 touchdowns — 35 passing and 10 rushing — and led the Panthers to the Super Bowl.

He has posted the worst two quarterback passer ratings of his seven-year NFL career in the past two seasons.

Rivera said he informed Newton about the decision to fire Shula after it was made, but wouldn't comment on the quarterback's reaction to the news calling it "personal."

This past season, Newton posted a QB rating of 80.7, which ranked 18th in the league. He completed just 59.1 percent of his passes for 3,301 yards with 22 touchdowns and 16 interceptions.

"This is all about growth as a football team, and we have room to grow," Rivera said.

SPORTS



Return of Chucky
Gruden cites unfinished business
in rejoining Raiders » **Page 31**

NBA

Curry
power

Star's effect on
Warriors even
more clear after
injury absence

By JANIE MCCAULEY
Associated Press

OAKLAND, Calif. — Stephen Curry pumped his fists and flexed his biceps. He dangled that signature mouthpiece from his teeth in sheer delight.

Oh, and he knocked down some of those familiar way-back three-pointers, too.

Yes, Golden State's sharp-shooting star is feeling it again, and he's proud to be, in his words, "that presence that kind of gets us going."

In a 32-point, nine-assist performance against Denver on Monday, Curry wound up 9-for-17 overall while making five of 10 three-pointers. But he's a menace for opposing defenses even without his best shot.

Curry's mere existence on the court makes every Warrior better. Teammate Draymond Green shot 42.1 percent from the field while Curry missed 11 games with a sprained right ankle. In the five games since Curry's return, Green has hit 55.6 percent. Klay Thompson and Andre Iguodala have also shot better since Curry came back.

"That's why he's a two-time MVP in this league, that's why we have two championships," Green said. "He's become the superstar that he has even on a night where it wasn't quite his night, he filled the stat sheet up like that and impacted the game. Even if he didn't have 32 points and nine assists, what he brings to our offense and all the attention that he draws that gets me open shots ... he creates a lot of mismatches on the floor for the defense."

SEE POWER ON PAGE 26

Golden State's
Stephen Curry
warms up before
a game last week.

DAVID J. PHILLIP/AP



Capitals win NHL-best 10th straight at home » **Page 28**

